AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH

SOCCER

VOL. 22 No. 1020 – TUESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2001 ● REGISTERED BY AUSTRALIAN POST ● PUBLICATIONS No. NBQ5726 WEEKLY $3.30 GST INCLUSIVE

SUPER SOUTH SURGE AHEAD

South Melbourne's Steve Panopoulos flies in the air following a challenge from an Adelaide City opponent.

By John Economos

THE BOB JANE STADIUM is the place to be this Sunday evening when the two top sides of the NSL clash in battle, fully aware that defeat is certainly not to be an option.

League leaders Souths, last week-end edged their lead even further, (to six points), gaining maximum League points over the visiting Adelaide City whilst the Glory only managed a late 1-1 home draw against current League champions, Wollongong.

Paul Trimboli: Souths' mercurial captain.

Engineered by mercurial linkman and captain, Paul Trimboli, Souths after 16 Rounds have rattled in 32 goals conceding just nine to have a super goal-difference of plus 23.

With sole striker Vas Kalogeracos through the middle plus wide men Vaughan Coveny on the right and Con Boutsianis, Souths have a lethal 'strike-department'.

In contrast, the Glory has scored four more goals but has conceded 16 to have an also respectable goal difference of 20.

The goals that Souths' quality steel defence has conceded to date, is still a single digit, however with the League's strongest attack coming to town, Souths' 'flat four' will be tested by the acidic stings from Damian Mori and Bobby Despotovski.

These two chaps from the West who have nailed in 19 of the Glory's tally of 36, (and if allowed the space), can ride into any town and shoot the place down.

SPIRIT SPLASH OUT ON NEW SIGNINGS

By John Economos

The Northern Spirit following its unexpected 1-2 loss last Friday night to Sydney United, (its fourth successive loss), broke out into battle stations mode by making four snappy signings to its staff.

The Club not only most surprisingly signed up Mickey Hickman as its new Assistant to Head coach Graham Arnold, but snapped up as well three new players.

An ever bigger surprise was the signing of Marconi's experienced and most valuable left flanker or central marker, Mike Smith, who the Spirit signed last week on a two year contract.

The durable and exceptionally reliable Smith, who had been making a long recovery from surgery to his groin in the off season, made his debut for the Spirit last Friday night at sweeper, playing strongly throughout the entire match.

As well, the Spirit over the week-end signed up Rangers' midfielder Lee Feeney and Blackburn defender Stuart Howson.

Both are on their way to Australia from the U.K.

"We have made some signings and changes to give the Northern Spirit every chance to fulfil its potential that lies within the squad and the Club," stated yesterday the Spirit's General manager, Mr Colin Mitchell.

"Mick Hickman is a respected coach who brings a wealth of experience with him to assist Graham Arnold.

"It is fair to say we are not fulfilling our potential and we have made moves, which we believe, will turn that around," ended Mr Mitchell.

The 22 year old Feeney recently toured Australia with the Rangers' Youth team and is a bright prospect at the Club whilst Howson, the skipper of Blackburn's Youth team, will arrive bringing with him a reputation as a strong defender that should add much-needed steel to the Spirit's leaky defence.

Mike Smith: Marconi's durable left flanker transferred to the Spirit.

THE NSL'S NEWEST LONG RANGE SPECIALISTS ... SEE GOOD OIL PAGES 4-5

AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

Issue No. 1020
"Published every Tuesday by
F.L. Press
5-13 Garners Ave.,
Marrickville NSW 2204

TELEPHONE
(editorial and general enquiries)
Tel: (02) 9562 0559
or
Tel: (02) 9562 0565

(advertising)
John Economos
Tel: (02) 9744 6984 OR
Tel: (02) 9562 0559

E-MAIL
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
soccerweekly@hotmail.com
ABSW's new E-mail:
soccer@foreignlanguage.com.au

FACSIMILE
(editorial, advertising and general enquiries)
(02) 9550 9332 or (02) 9564 1224

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 155 Marrickville NSW 1475

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Sylvia Marinos
Phone: (02) 9562 0575
Australia: $143 (GST incl.)
Overseas: $198 (GST incl.)

CARETAKER
Daniel Giorelando

CHIEF WRITER
John Economos

STAFF WRITER
Daniel Giorelando

LAYOUT/TYPESETTING
Mary Quartly, Alamita Vea

CORRESPONDENTS
Bert van Bedaf (Melbourne editor)
Alan Clarke (Melbourne)
Allan Crisp (Adelaide)
Glenn Davis (Brisbane)
Otto Bader (Wollongong)
Richard Kreider (Perth)
Graham Cooke (Canberra)
Joe Russo (Sydney)
Roy Hay (Victoria)
Greg Danvers (Newcastle)
Mark Stavroulakis (Sydney)
SCANNING
Bill Hawthorne, Alex Siafakos
FILM PLANNING
Nick Philips
PHOTOGRAPHY
Allsport

DISTRIBUTION
NSW/ACT:
FLP Pty Ltd. 5-13 Garners Ave,
Marrickville NSW 2204
Tel: (02) 9562 0500

VICTORIA:
FLP Pty Ltd. 72-78 Gipps Street,
Collingwood Vic 3066
Tel: (03) 9486 9522
Tel: (03) 9486 9858

QUEENSLAND:
Queensland Newspapers
Campbell St, Bowden Hills Qld. 4006
Tel: (07) 3252 6011

SOUTH AUSTRALIA:
Advertiser Newspapers Ltd.
Waymouth St, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: (08) 8218 9329

WESTERN AUSTRALIA:
Pan Hellenic Emporium,
67 James Street, Perth WA 6000
Tel: (08) 9328-4779
Recommended and maximum price.
$3.30
*All material appearing in *Australian and British Soccer Weekly* is copyright and reproduction in any form whatsoever is expressly forbidden without the written permission of the publisher. The publisher accepts no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts, illustrations or photographic material.
Deadline for contributions, articles and advertising is 3 days PRIOR to issue date.

Perinovic now a Blue Devil

Marko Perinovic: Bringing his wealth of experience to the Belconnen Blue Devils.

By Graham Cooke

Belconnen Blue Devils have signed veteran striker Marko Perinovic for the remainder of the NSW Premier League season.

The 36-year-old has a wealth of experience dating back to 1983 when he made his National Soccer League debut with Canberra City. He has also represented Inter Monaro, Sydney Olympic, Canberra Cosmos and Gippsland Falcons in the NSL for a total of 147 appearances and 33 goals.

In recent seasons Perinovic has played for Belconnen in the ACT Premiership, but thought he would have to sit out the summer after a knee reconstruction. However, he has been training for the past month and had made sufficient progress to persuade Devils' coach Lino Fiorese to sign him.

It is unlikely he will be seen in the NSW League for several weeks. "Marko is still far from match fitness and will not play until the specialist gives the okay," Fiorese said.

When that happens Perinovic could form an effective partnership with the league's leading scorer, Steve Lazzari, up front. A tough target man, he would certainly divert some of the attention by defenders, which has cut Lazzari's early-season goal-flow in recent weeks.

SOCCER CANBERRA GETS NEW BOSS

By Graham Cooke

One of the leading figures in staging the Olympic soccer tournament in Canberra, Alan Lee, has been appointed chief executive officer of Soccer Canberra.

He succeeds Robert Bennett who resigned before Christmas.

Lee, a former Soccer Canberra vice-president, was ACT operations manager for the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, responsible for the day-to-day running of Bruce Stadium during the tournament. He is believed to have been selected from a field of more than 20 applicants, including two from overseas.

SC president Steve Doszpot said Lee would bring many years of administrative and sporting expertise to the job.

"With over 12,000 registered players in the junior and senior ranks, he will be responsible for one of the biggest participation sports in Canberra," Doszpot said.

FRIENDSHIP CUP ENDS IN DIPLOMATIC DRAW

By Graham Cooke

The first three-match Friendship Cup series between the ACT's diplomatic community and a team selected by Soccer Canberra president Steve Doszpot, has brought that most diplomatic of results — a draw.

The Diplomats' 3-1 win in the most recent game, at Bruce Stadium, cancelled out the second match which was won by the president's men. The initial contest ended in a draw.

It is possible the series will now be extended. The Department of Foreign Affairs wants to put in a team and the interest among the diplomats has grown to the point where they may split their entry into regions, representing Europe, Asia and the Americas.

Steve Doszpot: Soccer Canberra president.

SYDNEY UNITED TO INVESTIGATE CROWD TROUBLE

Scenes from terraces during last weekend's game between Sydney United and Northern Spirit at the North Sydney Oval.

Sydney United's Board of Directors will adopt all means to banish the perpetrators of the ugly scenes at North Sydney Oval over the weekend.

Sydney United General Manager, Drago Zulj made the following statement on the issue:

"Of the 15 Sydney United fans who were involved in the incident after Danny Burt had scored, all have been banned from attending Sydney United home matches this season already.

The fact is that they are still attending the away matches and they continue to light flares and be involved in unruly behaviour that is continually giving the club fines from Soccer Australia and a bad image in the media."

"The club will be looking to address the issue at the next Board Meeting where further actions against these people will be taken."

"What these "fans" must realise is they are hurting our club and a minority is spoiling it for the remaining fans who are well behaved and who just want to watch a good game of soccer."

"In this crucial time, regarding the future of the Sydney United Soccer Club, incidents like these are only harming the club."

What these fans must realise is that their behaviour at home and away is monitored and the club is fined for every flare and every ugly incident even at away matches."

Parramatta To Dent The Knights' Armour

By John Economos

THE PARRAMATTA POWER on Friday night face a rejuvenated Melbourne Knights at the Parramatta Stadium with both combatants chasing a spot in the Top Six.

The Power after a string of unexpected losses recently, have slipped from threatening for a top two spot, but now find themselves striving to stay in the Top Six bracket.

Three teams can leap-frog the Power into sixth spot should the home side become unsaddled by the Knights.

David Mitchell: The Power's Coach.

Ahmad Elrich: The Power's right wingback.

A Knights win on Friday would lift them into sixth spot, regardless of other results.

Following their earlier victory in the season in Melbourne over the Power, (2-1), the Knights will come to Sydney with their confidence bolstered following two wins in their last two outings.

The Power's coach David Mitchell stated last night: "We will have midfielder Walter Ardone out with suspension, but other than him I will have a full squad available for selection.

"This game after our loss to Marconi last Saturday night has become even that much more important for us.

"The Knights will give us a tough game.

"They have been greatly strengthened by the addition of former Carlton quality players such as Andrew Marth, Steve Horvat and Lubo Lapsansky.

"They have looked a very good side in recent weeks and are creeping towards the Top Six level.

"The Knights have plenty of experience which is standing them in good stead," stated Mitchell.

The Power who are barely clinging to sixth spot on the League, to date has scored 26 goals but have conceded a relatively hefty 21 goals.

Adrian Cervinski: Melbourne Knights' striker.

With 25 League points, the Power lead the Knights by a single point.

The Melbourne Knights last weekend won their sixth game to date when they accounted for the Brisbane Strikers at home by 2-1.

The Power's right wingback Ahmad Elrich, has greatly impressed this season and was well rewarded by his recent call up into the Australian Youth squad.

Since his return from national duty Elrich has shown that he has rapidly matured since the beginning of the season.

Mitchell has rewarded Elrich with a regular spot in his first XI.

The Knights will again be looking to their central striker Adrian Cervinski who scored last Sunday against the Brisbane Strikers.

Vlado Vanis: The Knights' Coach.

Parramatta Stadium
Comes Alive with Action Packed Soccer
Power v Knights
Friday 2 February 2001
NSL Kick Off 7.30pm
For more information call 9630 9777
Switch onto POWER Credit Union
Principal Corporate Partner
PARRAMATTA POWER S.C.

Mac your day.
Offer available until 28.2.01
BUY ONE BIG MAC™ GET ONE FREE
Only Redeemable at McDonald's Restaurants in the following suburbs:-
Baulkham Hills, Blacktown, Carlingford, Castle Hill, Dural, Doonside, Granville, Kings Park, Merrylands, Northmead, North Parramatta, Parramatta Westfields, Prospect, Rosehill, Rouse Hill, Seven Hills, Wentworthville, Windsor

BUY ONE TICKET GET ONE FREE
Power v Knights
Friday 2 February 2001
Present this coupon at the box office on the night of the match

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil ...

By John Economos

IVAN VICELICH, the Auckland Kingz' goalscoring defender-cum-midfielder, has become the New Zealand Club's first 'exported player'.

It's believed that the very versatile and most energetic Vicelich, has signed a four year contract with Dutch side Roda JC Kerkrade.

The transfer fee for the player had still not been disclosed at the time ABSW went to press last night.

Ivan Vicelich: Kiwi off to Holland.

●●●●

MARCONI tomorrow night (Wednesday 31st January) will play an exhibition match at the Marconi Stadium, against the high quality international opposition in Red Star of Belgrade.

This exhibition match against the crack team from the Yugoslav first division is scheduled to kick of at 7.30pm.

It's already been fully anticipated that the Red Star attraction will draw a capacity crowd of 12,500 at the Marconi Stadium.

Bookings for tickets can be made by contacting Club Marconi's Reception Desk on 9823-2222.

●●●●

JAMIE HARNWELL, the Perth Glory's powerful central marker, scored what could easily become this season's most spectacular NSL goal, last Saturday night at the once again jam-packed Perth Oval.

With Wollongong, the current Champions of Australia as well as Oceania, leading 0-1, and with time fast running out, Harnwell came to the Glory's rescue with an absolute glorious goal.

Latching onto a ball some 41 metres out and with six minutes left on the clock, Jamie unleashed one of the most long-ranged rocketting goals ever seen in the NSL that screamed into the top left corner, leaving the 'Gong's goalkeeper, Grant Barlow, clutching air.

Jamie Harnwell: Scorer of the Glory's most spectacular goal, leaps with uncontrollable joy, having just seen his rocket shot hit the target.

The shell-shocked Barlow can easily take solace that not even the mighty World Cup custodian of England, Gordon Banks, could have blocked this long-ranged rocket.

Without question, Harnwell's goal is expected to be screened all over the world on various sports programmes.

●●●●

THE WOLLONGONG WOLVES, who proudly returned to Australia last Tuesday night as the newly crowned Champions of Oceania, bravely backed-up to play a most thrilling and exciting 1-1 draw last Saturday night against serious League Championship contenders, the Perth Glory.

For the past two weeks, Wollongong not only had to combat the severe tropical elements in Port Moresby, New Guinea, but also had to battle against the huge fatigue factor, before ultimately qualifying for the second FIFA World Club Championship Finals to be staged in Spain between July 29th and August 12th later this year.

Coach Ronnie Corry's Wollongong squad has now joined the most highly illustrious list of the 11 other National-Club champions for the Finals in Spain.

The other 11 Champion clubs are:

Deportivo La Coruna and Real Madrid (Spain), Al-Hilal (Saudi Arabia), Boca Juniors (Argentina), Esperanza (Tunisia), Galatasaray (Turkey), Hearts Of Oak (Ghana), Jubilo Iwata (Japan), Los Angeles Galaxy (USA), Olimpia (Honduras), Palmeiras (Brazil),

The host nation, (Spain), is entitled to two clubs for the Finals, with Real Madrid as the reigning European Champions and Deportivo La Coruna as the current Spanish League Champions.

Saso Petrovski: Wollongong's Oceania top tournament goalscorer with 13 goals.

●●●●

STILL ON OCEANIA's new champions, Wollongong, during the World Club qualifiers in Port Moresby played recently, the Australian National League champions battled through seven gruelling matches, (including the Final) in just 14 days.

Not only did Wollongong win all seven battles, but scored a phenomenal 43 goals, yet conceded a miserly 2 (in the semi-final).

Top goalscorer for Wollongong was ace-striker Saso Petrovski with 13, followed by Scotty Chipperfield who nailed in 10.

Debutant teenager Jay Lucas rattled in 8 whilst Paul Reid and Stuart Young scored three apiece.

Six other players also managed to contribute to Wollongong's avalanche of goals by scoring a goal each, including Wollongong's heroic goalkeeper, Daniel Beltrame.

Beltrame in one match took a penalty, (not in a shoot out), which was first parried.

But Beltrame was alert enough to follow up and slam the rebound into the target.

This goal counted as one from free play and was thus not classified as a 'penalty'.

Single goals scored for Wollongong by: David Cervinski, captain Matthew Horsley, David Huxley, Dino Mennillo, teenager Andrew Smith, plus Beltrame.

●●●●

MICKEY HICKMAN, the phlegmatic Englishman, who still today, is the only coach to have won the League Championship for Sydney Olympic, caused a huge surprise last Thursday when he put aside a quick trip to England to join the coaching staff at the Northern Spirit.

Mickey Hickman: Sydney Olympic's past hero coach.

Hickman had been in Japan for the past two years at the Hiroshima Club, Sanfrecce, as the trusted assistant to former Australian national coach, Eddie Thomson.

Realising that Hickman was back in Sydney from Japan, the Spirit's troubled Head coach Graham Arnold, zipped in and drafted 'Hickey' onto his coaching staff.

Ironically this Sunday night, the Northern Spirit is away to Sydney Olympic, Hickman's former Club.

Pan Kuen Kim: Marconi's star international sweeper.

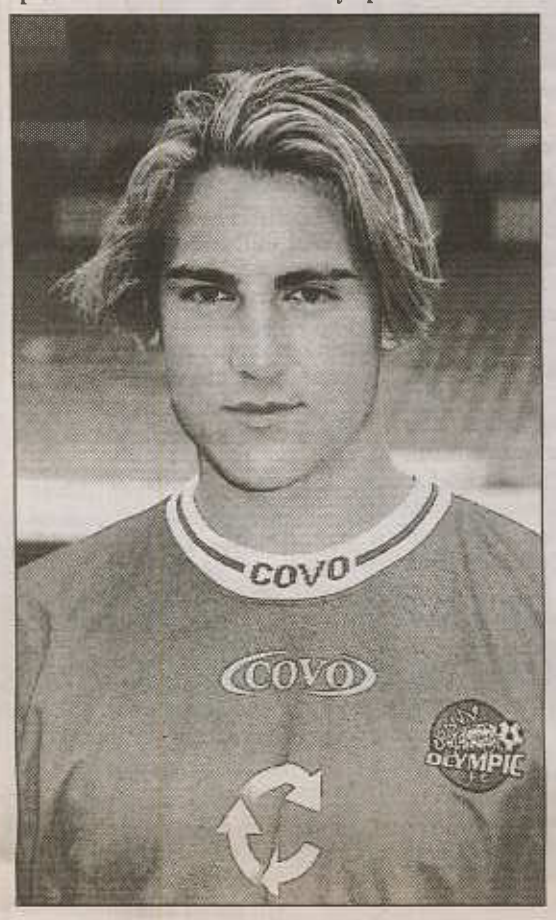
Ronnie Corry: Coach of Wollongong-the Oceania Champions.

The Good Oil ... The Good Oil

SYDNEY OLYMPIC tomorrow will be taking members of the Sydney media on a Harbour luncheon-cruise to promote Sunday's home clash at the Belmore Sports Ground against the Northern Spirit.

As well as Olympic's coach Branko Culina plus some of his Olympic squad members, on board the vessel 'Ancora' will be the Spirit's coach Graham Arnold and his captain Gabriel Mendez.

Olympic three weeks ago started staging weekly media luncheons to develope a closer relationship with the Sydney media.



Damon Collina: Olympic's midfielder.

Fausto de Amicis: South Melbourne's experienced left defender, seen here on the ball last Sunday night at the Bob Jane Stadium against Adelaide City.

●●●●

FAUSTO DE AMICIS, South's Melbourne's highly experienced left defender, got his team out of jail against Adelaide City with a cracking goal that ultimately gave Souths a 1-0 victory over the visiting South Australians.

From almost 35 metres out, and a minute into stoppage time of the first session, Fausto decided to contribute to Souths' attack.

He let fly with a scorching drive that rocketted into the top left corner of that target that left Adelaide City's goalkeeper Adrian Cagalj with no chance whatsoever.

●●●●

MIKE SMITH, Marconi's durable midfielder or marker, that surprised everyone by signing last week with the Northern Spirit, has played well over 150 matches in the NSL and will prove a most valuable acquisition for the North Sydneysiders.

Coach Graham Arnold started 'Smithy' last Friday night in the sweeper's role that allowed the Spirit's coach to sit on the bench.

The 31 year old highly experienced Smith arrived in Australia from the U.K. to play for Wollongong back in 1991.

"I'm looking forward to playing for the Spirit," stated Smith.

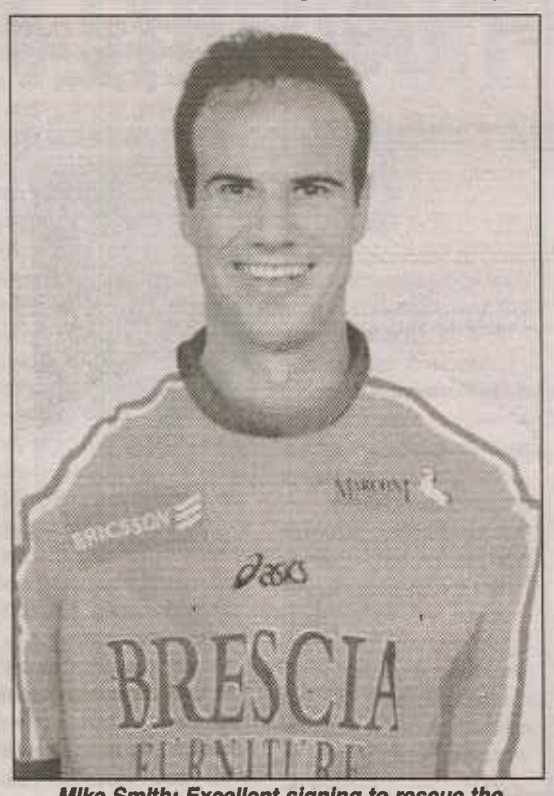
"It's all happened pretty quickly so my head is spinning a little.

"I only got the call last Monday and signed last Wednesday, but I am keen to get out there, " ended Smith.

Meanwhile Arnold stated: "Mike Smith is a tough, solid and experienced defender and is just what we needed at the back.

"He's a good signing and what I have been after for some time.

"I'm sure he (Smith), will do the job and add to our squad," ended a pleased Arnold.



Mike Smith: Excellent signing to rescue the Northern Spirit.

Canterbury Marrickville Olympic SC

PLAYERS STILL NEEDED

Under 14s Super Youth League

0417 453 157 • 9385 6140

Western Sydney Lions SC

Proudly Promoted to Division 2 NSW State League for Season 2001

Pre season training has commenced.
Experienced Players & Goalkeepers Required
First Grade • U21s • U18s
Training Nights
Every Tuesday — Thursday — Friday
6.30pm Sharp
Venue: Knights Park #4
Orchardleigh Ave, Yennora

Contacts:

Alan Babanour **0419 638 213**
George Abdishou **0416 226 129**
Michael Mamoo **0402 034 238**
Martin Abi-Arrage **0409 891 066**

Proudly Sponsored By J.J. Snacks

Hakoah SOCCER CLUB

We are currently interviewing for the position of First Grade Coach in Second Division Federation.

Excellent grounds.

Facilities and good package.

Please Call Mark on

9697 3256

PLAYERS WANTED

North Epping Rangers Soccer Club

Under 9's through to Premier League Division One in the 2001 Competition.

Registration Dates:
Saturday 3rd February 2pm-5pm
Friday 9th February 6.30pm-8.30pm
Saturday 10th February 2pm-5pm

At the Clubhouse
Boundary Rd, North Epping
Please Contact Club President
Steve Colquhoun — 9876 2000

OFF THE CROSSBAR

By Allan Crisp

RELUCTANT HERO

South Australian State team captain Paul Simmons has put his family before his sporting ambitions by rejecting an invitation from State coach Mike Barnett to join the squad for next month's friendly games against visiting Japanese clubsides Verdy Kawasaki and Consadole Sapporo.

Had Simmons accepted, it would have put the long-serving midfielder closer to his ultimate goal of eligibility for player life membership of the South Australian Soccer Federation.

Simmons and his wife are due to leave in three weeks for an overdue overseas holiday and since that happy event clashedwith the second of the State matches, the playmaker declined to play in case he might suffer an injury on the eve of departure in three weeks time.

With dedication his watchword, Simmons decided to maintain his fitness by turning out for Metro Stars in the Summer Series.

His worst fears were realised when he injured knee ligaments during the first half of the second round match against Hills Hawks and was carried off on a stretcher.

Medicos have estimated the knee damage will take three to four weeks to heal, so happily, "Simmo" and his wife will be able to embark on the deserved vacation.

"We just couldn't go on holiday in the past because of soccer commitments and we didn't want to put it off again before we start a family," Simmons said.

"The injury was nobody's fault, it was just a 50/50 tackle," said Simmons, who is in his third season with rookie club Metro Stars.

Simmons hopes that Barnett will forgive him for turning down the chance to again represent SA. Simmons, 28, would deem it an honour to don the State colours next season when the SASF celebrates its Centenary season.

Of the 22 matches he has played for SA, Simmons regards his debut match against Victoria as his most memorable.

The game, played in Mount Gambier, ended in a 1-1 draw with young Simmons coming off the substitute bench to score the equaliser.

OLYMPIAN RETURNS

Key Japanese Olympic national team defender Yuji Nakazawa will return to Hindmarsh Stadium on Sunday, February 11, when his club side Verdy Kawasaki plays South Australia.

Nakazawa wore the number 2 shirt when Japan and the USA drew 2-2 in a classic quarter-final, which the Americans won 5-4 in an absorbing penalty shoot-out.

Angelo Costanzo: Staying with Marconi until the end of the season.

J League side, Verdy Kawasaki and SA will clash at 6pm in the training match, with second division Japanese team Consadole Sapporo playing Adelaide City at 8pm.

Sapporo will double up for a training game against SA on Sunday, February 18.

JETS FLY HIGH

Modbury Jets coach, Duane Gray reckons he's on a winner with his new signing Ryan Mitchell.Gray recruited Mitchell from Campbelltown Red Devils and the youngster responded by scoring a brace on debut against Western Strikers.

Having lost speedster Joe Blefari to Raiders and surrendered Gary Aitken to retirement, Gray signed Mitchell and put Adelaide Hawks striker, cum midfielder Simon Wegner on a loan contract.

All action man Colin Isaacson has reversed a decision to hang up his boots and has resumed training. "Colin has got his hunger for the game back, but he won't play in the summer series," Gray said.

OVERSEAS AMBITIONS

Like all promising young players Marconi midfielder Angelo Costanzo has ambitions to ply his trade overseas, but has pledged not to leave his new club until the end of the current season.

Costanzo told an Adelaide radio audience on 5RPH that his priorities are with the Stallions and their quest to win the championship.

"I'll stay with Marconi until the end of the season, but have another go at getting an overseas club during the off season," said Costanzo, who previously trialled in England and Scotland.

"There is a chance I'll get a trial with Perugia and possibly other Italian clubs."

Costanzo said arrangements for the trials would be made through Marconi.

"The Marconi club is bigger than I expected and the facilities are excellent," he said.

PAY THE PENALTY

Seldom has a game yielded three penalties and four other goals in a single half, but that's what Campbelltown Red Devils and the Panthers dished up in their Summer Series night clash at Hindmarsh Stadium.

Paul Beltrame opened the goal feast for the Devils from the penalty spot in the 11th minute after Domenic Signoriello was floored in the box.

The latter made it 2-0 five minutes later when he finished a smart move before the Panthers were awarded a spot-kick when Scott Price was fouled, leaving Jay Honeysett to convert.

That goal came as a great relief for young Panthers coach, Anthony Best, who still must have been reeling from the 11-0 battering administered by Adelaide City.

Signoriello then boomed home a drive from just outside the box to bring the scoreline to 3-1, but that was to be the calm before the storm.

A classic strike from Japanese-born Jun Udagawa preceded a 36th minute penalty from Larry Piscioneri before Adam Perre got into the act with another blast from outside the area to bring the half time tally to 6-1 in favour of the merciless Devils.

To their eternal credit, the Panthers with player-coach Best switching to sweeper, contained the Reds to a single second half goal, netted by substitute David Crisci.

STARS SHINE

Metro Stars accounted for Hills Hawks 3-1 in a match played in exhaustive 30 plus degree heat, but neither side was prepared to wilt.

With former Socceroo striker Steve Maxwell running up front the Hills were alive until three minutes before half time when Dino Sordillo capitalised on a brilliant weaving run from Steve DeGioviannello to open the scoring.

It was 2-0 for the Metros right on half time after Vince Schmizzi converted a penalty he had created.

Andy Kay roofed a fine shot in the 52nd minute, but Metro substitute Steve Taddeo ended a blazing run by outpacing the Hills defence before cracking the ball into the net.

SA SUMMER SERIES RESULTS ROUND 2

Campbelltown City 7 (Signorello 2, Beltrame, Udagawa, Crisci, Piscioneri, Perre) **Panthers 1** (Honeysett); **Metro Stars 3** (Sordillo, Schmizzi, Taddeo) **Hills Hawks 1** (Kay); **Olympic 6** (Parissos 3, Galanopoulos, Albanese, Tsoukalas) **Port Lion Pirates 1** (Kaperski); Seaford 0, Para Hills 0; **Raiders 4** (Karritevlis 2, Zilic, Saric) **Noarlunga United 0; Cobras 1** (Iannou) **Cumberland Foxes 1** (Detrey); **Enfield Falcons 1** (Leek) Blue Eagles 3 (Brooks 3); **Birkalla 3** (Westervelt 2, Tsekinis) **Adelaide City 0; White City 2** (Armour, McDonald) **Modbury Jets 2** (Trimboli, tog); **Croydon Kings 5** (Woods, Pitucci, Piotrowski, Pirone, Christison) **Western Strikers 0.**

ROUND 3

Saturday, February 3

Blue Eagles v Cobras (To be advised)
Cumberland v Enfield Falcons (Bailey Reserve)
Port Lion v Metro Stars (Pirate Park)
Hills Hawks v Olympic (Karinya Reserve)
Adelaide City v Campbelltown City (Oakden)
Panthers v Birkalla (O'Sullivan Beach)

Allan Crisp can be heard on the 5RPH (1197AM) Breakfast Soccer Show each Tuesday from 7.30am-9am, along with SASF Coach of The Year Phil Scardigno, Channel 10 Sports Presenter Rob Popplestone and The Advertiser soccer writer Meno Toutsidis.

THANKYOU ABSW

WOLLONGONG WOLVES

Facsimile Transmission from GRAEME HANEY

Date : January 25, 2000
To : John Economos
Subject : ABSW Support

Dear John,

On behalf of the team and management of the Wollongong Wolves, I wish to congratulate you and your publication for the outstanding coverage of our Oceania campaign.

Many other media outlets choose not to provide only token coverage, but not ABSW, you ensured the soccer public were kept up to date and went to extraordinary lengths in doing so.

We are extremely grateful and ask that you accept the enclosed shirt as a token of our appreciation.

Warmest regards

Graeme Haney
GENERAL MANAGER

Wollongong Epic Events Pty Limited Trading as WOLLONGONG WOLVES ABN 68 080 209 052

Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I have been following Football (soccer) since I was eight-years-old (now 68). I have seen administrators come and go, grabbing the glory whilst the results were glowing, watching them drop off and leave our game when there was no glory to be had.

Robbie Slater: Comments by the fans.

We don't need ex-politicians, media people, high fliers who know absolutely nothing about our game (ex-Rugby League, Union, high profile business people) who have not been successful in their own area to try and advise soccer people. There are plenty of ex-players who would be only too keen to have an imput into the game they love but have been stymed by these imports.

I totally support Robbie Slater in his statement regarding Soccer Administration.

Let's clean up the show and use people who really know the game not glory hunters and would be if they could be.

All my life I have been watching probably the most knowledgeable soccer person being rebuffed by officials who could not tie his boots. I do not believe his contacts world wide and knowledge could not be used.

He has been promised jobs after 74 World Cup, pre Venables era and on other occasions but kept in the back ground by officialdom.

I am sure there are plenty of people who have the same love of the game as Johnny Warren prepared to step up and be counted given the chance.

Ross Warren.

Editor's Note: Mr Ross Warren, (older brother to Former Australian World Cup Captain, Johnny), was a tenacious right-defender with St George Budapest in the early '60s.

Dear Sir,

It's great to see the increase of letters to the Editors and in particular the many new names, perhaps this points to the frustration by the fans on seeing our game going through another crisis.

I would like to ask this question of these fans, why are we channeling our grievances just to Soccer Australia? Surely any blind Harry can tell you that unless we prove to the media that there are hundreds of thousands of fans out there who will increase their (ratings) (circulation) etc.

If only they would treat Soccer fairly and report not only the ugly minority side of the game but also the good side, ponder this — Wollongong Wolves qualify for world club championship receive 5-7 million dollars (publish nil) imagine — AFL — ARL — cricket — golf rookie etc etc achieving similar result.

Media goes bananas (another Australian champion) new era for ARL) (AFL set to conquer world) Know what I mean?

Want to raise a petition? Then lets direct it to the media to demand a fair go for Soccer and force them to listen.

L. Fardell,
Terrigal. NSW.

FANS BEHIND SLATER

By Bert van Bedaf

Two nationwide fan clubs have rallied behind Northern Spirit striker and former international Robbie Slater who faced disciplinary action after making public statements criticising the running of soccer in Australia.

Soccer Australia charged Slater with "bringing the game into disrepute", citing two charges, and asked him to attend a Disciplinary Tribunal hearing.

The hearing was scheduled for last night.

Two fan clubs, STAND (Seven Talks and Never Delivers) and ASFA (Australian Soccer Fans Association) issued statements in defence of Slater.

STAND called on fans to fax or email Soccer Australia in support of the former Socceroo and overseas star, who played for Blackburn Rovers winning an English Premier League title, West Ham United and Southampton before returning to Australia in 1998.

Robbie Slater: Speaks out against SA.

"Robbie Slater needs our support! SA has accused Robbie of bringing our game into disrepute. I'm sure we all feel that Robbie has valid points and has spoken on behalf of many supporters," STAND president Con Monteleone said.

Ryan Stables, a member of ASFA's executive, said the association had "registered their support" for Slater.

"We stand by Robbie Slater 100 per cent in these charges," Stables said.

He said the organisation was "outraged" that Slater has been "charged for having his say over things that the fans feel strongly about".

"Most fans of the NSL would have said and have been saying exactly what Mr Slater said for a number of months if not years now," Stables said.

"This is just to prove Soccer Australia doesn't listen to those in the game. Mr Slater is right. We need change at the top," he said.

LACK OF TV WORRIES FIFA

By Bert van Bedaf

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has promised Australian fan club STAND to look into the lack of soccer on Australian television and the arrangement involving rights holder Channel Seven and Soccer Australia.

In response to various submissions made by the president of STAND, Con Monteleone, Blatter has replied in no uncertain terms.

"Your description of how the game is neglected by television is a particular matter of concern to us, since one of the main objectives of FIFA, the world football governing body, is according to our statutes 'to promote the game of association football in every way it deems fit'. We therefore intend to bear your report in mind and shall scrutinise the situation of our game in Australia very closely," Blatter replied to Monteleone.

STAND, acronym for Seven Talks and Never Delivers, has been waging a campaign against the national television station's lack of enthusiasm to promote soccer despite entering into a 10-year rights contract at $25 million three years ago. For its earnings, Seven broadcasts a free-to-air highlights package once a week past midnight and a live match on its pay-tv station.

The fan club also has been agitating against Soccer Australia, claiming it has done little past and present to promote soccer on Australian media and attract major sponsors.

Sepp Blatter: FIFA President.

Last November Monteleone hand-delivered a damning report to FIFA during a meeting with chief of finance Ulrich Schneider.

In the report STAND claimed Soccer Australia had "buried their heads in the sand" by not admitting "they made a mistake in their choice of broadcaster."

It also said "Soccer Australia for the second year running have failed to secure a league sponsor" and "last year attendance fell by 12 per cent even though an extra team was admitted".

"We ask you to please intervene. Our game is in serious risk," the report claimed.

Leichhardt Tigers Soccer Club Inc.

LEICHHARDT TIGERS

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE

Vacancies still exist for players in the U/17 and U/12 age groups.

Please direct all inquiries to Tony Raciti on 0402 30 6666

Melville recovering as Euro clubs chase Strikers deal

As Brisbane Strikers chairman Ross Melville was recovering in hospital from a weekend heart attack, it's been confirmed European sides are also considering them as an Australian feeder club.

Brisbane Strikers secretary Ray Evans said Melville was taken to hospital last Saturday after suffering a serious heart attack at his home and was expected to be out of action for a few weeks while he recovered.

"It was a pretty serious heart attack but he's doing fine now," said Evans.

"He was lucky it happened at home and he had his wife with him to help otherwise the consequences could have been far worse."

Melville last week confirmed English Premier League giant Leeds were just one club which had discussed the possibility of forging a strategic alliance with the club.

"The Strikers are very attractive to any professsional club in Europe," Melville said.

"We are a primary target but at the end of the day we'll do what is best for Queensland. Leeds is only one consideration.

"A number of clubs have spoken to the Strikers in recent times about acquiring a stake in the Strikers. Leeds is one of those."

The Strikers currently has a sponsorship arrangement with Parmalat which owns Italian giant Parma FC and the club is being careful how its handles the Leeds situation.

"Our commitment is to Parmalat and we value that. That is where our loyalties lie," Melville said.

"If we were to do any shift in respect to ownership and/or major sponsorship, we would not only consult with Parmalat, but we would also consult Hyundai."

Leeds United chairman Peter Ridsdale is yet to confirm which Australian club he has chosen as a feeder side following his recent visit here.

But it was recently reported in the Sydney media that Leeds had chosen Brisbane because of several factors.

The Strikers, who won the championship under coach Frank Farina in 1997, currently are the only team in a city with a population of 1.6 million people, although local club Brisbane Lions, have applied for national league admission next season.

Facilities at its new homeground at Ballymore are believed to have impressed Leeds' officials while the Strikers have no ethnic ties and boast a youth development system through the Queensland Academy of Sport which is arguably the best in the country.

SPORTS EVENT OF THE YEAR

Organiser **FITROY-SERBIA** from Melbourne & Minor Sponsors
BEO EXPORT & BSW Windows
TEAM OF CHAMPIONS FROM BELGRADE

"RED STAR"

1990-91 World European Clubs Champions of the World,
Rank 11 World Listing All Times
1990-91 Finalists European Champion Cup, Red Star v Olympic,
Finalists Red Star v Colo Colo (South America)

GAMES TO BE PLAYED IN AUSTRALIA:

SYDNEY: Wednesday 31st January. *Start 7.30pm*
Marconi v Red Star (Marconi Stadium — Bossley Park)

ROCKDALE: Saturday 3rd February. *Start 7.30pm*
Rockdale-Ilinden v Red Star (Rockdale-Ilinden Sport Centre)
210 West Botany Rd, ROCKDALE

MELBOURNE: Monday 5th February. *Start 7.30pm*
Fitzroy City (Serbia) v Red Star (Olympic Village Stadium)

TICKET AVAILABLE from SYDNEY TICKETEK (02) 9266 4000
PERTH Soccer Federation Office (08) 9383 7878

GET IN FAST TO RESERVE YOUR TICKETS

Others Sponsors:
PARADA International, CABRAMATTA Smash Repair, LILY Paper Supply, ATLAS Cleaning Services, TWINTEX P/L King Cotton Sales.

RED STAR PLAYERS ARE IN HIGH DEMAND: Milan (Italy) is looking for coach Slavoljub Muslin and player Goran Drulic. Fiorentina (Italy) for Pjanovic, Valencia (Spain) for Bunjevcevic, Lyon (France) for Lalatovic, Bordeaux (France) for Vukomanovic, Schalke 04 (Germany) for Djenic etc.

FOR MORE INFORMATION 0416 039 503, (02) 9602 6999

RED STAR SHINE IN THE WEST

By Richard Kreider

The West Australian State team took on the might of the visiting Red Star Belgrade side at Litis Stadium last Sunday and although they lost the match, the home side can be pleased with their performance, especially goalkeeper Cory Hugo and defender Troy Bernard.

Time and again Hugo denied the Red Star strikeforce with some breathtaking aerobatics to deny the likes of Ivan Gvozdenovic, Mihaljo Pjanovic and Nenad Miljkovic.

Played before a crowd of almost 4,000, of which many were wearing the visiting club colours, Pjanovic opened the scoring after just five minutes which came at the end of some slick inter-play. Sadly, the quality action was spoiled by a red flare being thrown onto the pitch.

The WA side managed to contain the talented Yugoslav outfit until the final moments of the match when Dragan Stevanovic broke through to hit the back of the net to make it 2-0.

The second half started with Red Star making nine changes, including super star Goran Drulic, which didn't go down too well with State coach Paul Wormley who had five players warming the bench, since he was only told of the move 30 minutes prior to the start of the game.

COACH WANTED

For **All Saints Hunters Hill Soccer Club**
Premier League (PL2) team for the upcoming season in the Gladesville Hornsby Football Association.

Contact Alan Jenkins
02 9808 5645 (H),
9956 8822 (B) or
0419 255 770 (Mob).

AFTERMATH OF CARLTON DEBACLE

RESTORING MELBOURNE'S PRIDE

The collapse of national league club Carlton late last year has plunged Melbourne's soccer scene in a pit of decline from which it desperately and quickly needs to recover, writes Victorian editor, Bert van Bedaf.

For a city with a population of about 3.5 million, Melbourne's two remaining soccer teams should be living in clover, with their gates being trampled flat.

South Melbourne is doing fine. Having the undivided and devoted attention of the city's Greek community, it draws crowds of 8,000 or more. The Melbourne Knights are finding comfort in their Croatian heritage, attracting around 5,000 spectators to their matches.

Both clubs also are gradually growing beyond their traditional constituencies and with long pedigrees in the national league they have become the rocks upon which soccer in Melbourne has been forged.

Yet, nothing grafted on to the rock has been able to flourish, so that the sport might expand in this city. The Collingwood Warriors did not complete their inaugural 1996-97 season. Carlton teetered towards extinction in four tortuous years from the 1997-78 season.

Carlton is not the only Melbourne NSL club that has met with failure.

Twelve Victorian clubs have participated in the national league since it was founded in 1977 and three survive. (Nationally, 26 clubs have folded in 24 years of NSL history. Taking into account the sacking of three clubs in 1995 (and now a minimum of four), this easily amounts to a club per season, which is a statistic worth contemplating by the nation's soccer authorities).

Victoria's survivors are South Melbourne, a founding and lasting member with more than 650 matches to its credit, the Melbourne Knights, with more than 460 matches, and regional club Eastern Pride, originally the Morwell Falcons and until last season called the Gippsland Falcons, with more than 230 matches.

As Morwell Falcons, the country club once struck fear in the hearts of Melbourne teams in the Victorian Premier League. The Falcons won entry into the NSL in the 1992-93 season, finishing third bottom.

During the 1994-95 season of the long knives, when former Soccer Australia chairman David Hill sacked Melbourne Zebras, Parramatta Eagles and Heidelberg United, the Morwell Falcons escaped the hell fires by finishing fourth. It was their highest placing.

They'd become the Gippsland Falcons by 1996 and became Eastern Pride this season. The Pride is at the bottom of the NSL table like a stricken diver running out of air, searching for a lifeline.

Dean Fak (right) of Eastern Pride: One of the Melbourne based teams flying the city's flag in the National Soccer League.

Melbourne's fallen NSL clubs, apart from Collingwood, Carlton, Melbourne Zebras (formerly Brunswick United Juventus) and Heidelberg United (which began as Fitzroy United Alexander), also include Preston, Footscray JUST, Sunshine George Cross, Green Gully and Mooroolbark.

Green Gully, as reigning champion, Preston and Heidelberg play in the Victorian Premier League. Sunshine and Mooroolbark play in State leagues. The others have perished as senior clubs.

Struggling Sunshine, for example, is not even a shade of its former glory. Club stalwart Alf Zahra recently pleaded for amateur players to step forward and "make something out of themselves". Zahra warned "the future of the club is on the line".

The loss of Carlton has left a gaping hole in Melbourne's soccer calendar. In many respects Melbourne soccer is "on the line".

As far as derbies go South Melbourne and the Melbourne Knights continue the tradition, but Melbourne needs a third club to add greater excitement to the local fixtures. This could be provided by the (partial) relocation of Eastern Pride to Melbourne.

Victoria's third club, Eastern Pride is in danger of being eliminated from the NSL next season, when the league will be reduced to 12 clubs.

With Carlton gone, three more clubs must be culled from what was a 16-club competition.

But the scramble for seats on soccer's stuttering bus will be complicated by submissions of several new entities. Soccer Australia has received applications from Adelaide's South Coast Eagles, two entries from Perth, Western Lighting and Fremantle City and the Brisbane Lions from Queensland.

Shopping mall millionaire Con Makris is confident his Eagles bid can get up. He claims several overseas-based players have already committed themselves to his team, including goal keeper Zeljko Kalac, speedy winger Stan Lazaridis and Kevin Muscat.

Clubs touted for axing in addition to Eastern Pride include Sydney United, Newcastle United, Canberra Cosmos and Brisbane Strikers. Struggling Adelaide City may not be immune to the pending storm. Who eventually will go is still uncertain. But when the quake arrives, the apple tree may never look the same again as the damaged fruit is shaken down.

In its bid to survive, Eastern Pride has turned to Melbourne furniture millionaire Tony Schiavello, who came within a whisker of keeping Carlton alive but withdrew at the last minute when the salvage mission appeared too uncertain and too costly.

Schiavello tasted success as president of Brunswick United Juventus when it won the NSL title in 1985. He genuinely wants to become involved in soccer again and give Melbourne its much needed push for renewal.

Schiavello's enthusiasm travelled nationwide. Canberra Cosmos approached him to stage a rescue mission. But the former Brunswick king is too much a Melbourne man to wager his fortune on the ACT.

Pride has offered Schiavello a 70 per cent stake in the club for a cost of $3 million. Keeping Morwell as its base, it wants to become the third club in Melbourne, possibly under an arrangement with VPL club Bulleen.

Talks to that affect have reportedly already been held.

The Morwell club spent some time already in financial purgatory and moved out of administration into private ownership with a debt of more than one million.

Although debt has been drastically reduced, with a $300,000 council loan still to be cleared, Pride has suffered from low attendances and poor performances. It lost 1-0 to Newcastle last Friday night.

A move to Melbourne appears to be its only real prospect to stay alive.

The club already has three former Carlton players on its books, Mark Atkinson, Mike Conroy and Ange Motsiopoulos. Its England import Neville Roach walked out on the club over back-pay last week, but it seems personal problems also played a role.

Pride has high hopes it can retain its place in the NSL as a Melbourne club with a link to regional Victoria.

"The prospect of Tony Schiavello becoming involved and extending the club's reach to Melbourne will make the club more attractive for the national league. Surely Soccer Australia must see this," one of Pride's directors Fred di Sipio said recently.

It is important for Victorian soccer that an arrangement like this one can succeed. Perhaps Pride's dual role as Melbourne's third club, in addition to its solid background and founding base in regional Victoria, coupled with sound financial backing, can be the answer to the state's previous losses.

For Melbourne's prestige and soccer's sake, success in this town is paramount to counter the many failures. Victoria can ill-afford to watch yet another club going under without having its reputation as a sporting state seriously tarnished.

ALL TIME NSL TABLE, AS AT 01/01/01

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts*
South Melbourne	655	313	158	184	1041	763	1097
Marconi Stallions	654	307	154	193	1120	803	1075
Adelaide City	654	275	171	208	964	753	996
Sydney Olympic	629	252	170	207	902	786	926
Melbourne Knights	461	208	103	150	705	577	727
Sydney United	461	203	118	140	646	559	727
Wollongong Wolves	527	176	138	213	710	792	666
Adelaide Sharks	507	169	104	234	631	776	611
Heidelberg United	444	159	121	164	586	639	598
Sydney City	266	153	64	49	519	265	523
APIA Leichhardt	368	135	102	131	458	459	507
St George	364	132	103	129	509	514	499
Preston	342	119	100	123	433	415	457
Footscray	342	98	96	148	375	493	390
Brisbane Lions	292	91	78	123	358	440	351
Brisbane Strikers	261	96	58	107	363	378	346
N'castle KB/R'bud	240	88	61	91	328	350	325
Canberra City	266	79	67	120	335	394	304
Brisbane City	266	75	72	119	292	407	297
Eastern Pride	235	64	67	104	253	371	259
Newcastle Breakers	225	62	63	100	274	365	249
Parramatta Eagles	182	60	52	70	207	228	232
Brunswick	172	62	37	73	197	242	223
Sunshine	200	55	51	94	227	317	216
Perth Glory	125	61	26	38	224	171	209
Blacktown City	180	51	39	90	221	325	192
Carlton	96	41	24	31	159	119	147
Canberra Cosmos	159	29	38	92	191	329	125
Northern Spirit	74	29	12	33	91	105	99
Western Suburbs	52	20	13	19	79	74	73
Paramatta Power	46	21	6	19	72	60	69
Green Gully	72	17	18	37	74	103	69
Kingz	46	18	8	20	73	80	62
Penrith City	50	12	16	22	53	76	52
Inter Monaro	44	10	11	23	47	80	41
Collingwood	26	6	9	11	32	44	27
Mooroolbark	26	5	5	16	31	61	20
Wollongong Mac	26	3	9	14	23	53	18
Canterbury	22	2	7	13	17	41	13
Newcastle United	11	1	5	5	7	20	8

** based on 3 pts per win, 1 per draw, for all games. Table excludes finals matches. (Table provided courtesy of South Melbourne).*

SOCCER WOMAN

BY JANENE MAR

Loisel looks to the future

French National Coach Elisabeth Loisel led her team here to Australia for the first time, not with winning amongst the team's goals, but to continue to develop her team in preparation for the European Championship Finals Tournament (Euro 2001), and for the years to come.

Despite Euro 2001 kicking off in just five months time, Loisel was still prepared to utilise the this month's Australia Cup as an opportunity to provide further international experience to several young newcomers to her side and continue to experiment with on-field changes.

Emilie Dos Santos, Sandrine Rouquet, and Sabrina Viguier each travelled downunder with one cap under their belt, having made their debut in France's last match in November. All three were given a starting eleven guernsey whilst in Australia.

Tests were carried out on tour by the team doctor to measure the effectiveness of the players' recovery between matches. The Australian heat would be the one difference, but Loisel came here regarding the summer conditions as a further challenge on the players, describing it as "psychologically and physically interesting".

The team also made the trip without three key players through injury, striker Anne Zenoni a late withdrawal after being selected amongst the eighteen, joining Francoise Jezequel and Elodie Woock on the sidelines at home in France.

Loisel has orchestrated the Tricolours' most successful period in history, qualifying for the Euro Finals for the second time, but this being the first occasion on which they achieved the feat with direct qualification by winning their group, therefore not having to go through playoff matches to reach the top eight. The fact that they won Group One undefeated and a clear three points ahead of Olympic 2000 nation Sweden speaks volumes in itself of the progression achieved under Loisel.

Loisel has been developing this team since taking on the role of National Coach in July 1997. Before that, Loisel worked as Assistant Coach for nine years, and has also headed the National U21 Team from 1989 to the present day.

France's current success is the result of changes made to the system by Loisel over the time of her reign, involving both players and support staff alike. Yet for the tangible improvement achieved, the thirty-seven year old is more than aware the job is far from over.

"I changed the organisation of the team, both on the field and outside," Loisel explained. "As part of the preparation, I added more people to my staff. Now everyone knows what they must do."

An important key to the smooth transition from youth to full international honours is the establishment of the Centre National d'Entrainement et de Formation for Under 20s which first kicked off two years ago. Four such athletes — Sonia Bompastor, Peggy Provost, Emilie Dos Santos, and Hoda Lattaf — training in the full-time program made the tour to Australia. Loisel oversees the program in Clairefontaine which is run day-to-day by coach Gerard Preacher.

Loisel's credentials also include a position as FIFA Instructor since the beginning of 1999 and was a member of the Technical Study Group at that year's World Cup.

With a background as a sports teacher, Loisel long held ambitions in coaching, and moved directly into elite coaching after hanging up her boots. As a player, Loisel notched up 41 caps for her country over a nine year period, captaining the side for seven years.

France next take on Olympic champions Norway in mid February, one of several matches and training camps in the lead-up to Euro 2001. Closer to the event, they will take to the mountains to undertake high altitude training.

"We have now a good team to take to the Championship and will seek the best result possible. If by chance we get a good group, perhaps we will play for the Cup."

MANN POWER

From the disappointment of missing out on the Interim Squad, to later be named in the final Matildas Australia Cup Team, her first representative selection. Then a starting eleven position for all three matches, and to top it all off, a first goal for Australia.

Striker April Mann was the biggest story to emerge from the recent Australia Cup three-test series against France. The 22-year-old Queenslander lived out a fairytale, first receiving the unexpected call-up which then just grew from strength to strength.

At the back of her mind, Mann knew this was as good a time as ever to break through into the Matildas' ranks — post-Olympics and with a new coach at the helm. But her name was not amongst the twenty-four initially named mid-WNSL by Interim national coach Adrian Santrac. Perhaps now was not her time. After all, she had had to make a concerted effort to return to match fitness after three months in the US working at summer camp.

Yet unknown to her, the QAS Sting striker who finished equal second top scorer with four goals, soon came into consideration after NSW forward Michelle Carney declared herself unavailable for selection.

"I was excited, amazed, shocked," said Mann of the phone call from Santrac. "I didn't expect to get a call at all, I didn't know what was going on."

To be named in a team is one thing, to earn a starting guernsey quite another. The late withdrawal of striker Julie Murray certainly did Mann's chances no harm, but the opportunity still had to be seized. Mann's only previous flirtation with the green and gold was as a member of the National Train-On Squad in 1998, and a late call-up replacing injured Queensland teammate Kim Revell for a training camp in 1996. She also toured New Zealand as a member of the 1995 Australian Schoolgirls Team.

Mann had no trouble fitting into the groove once arriving at the week-long training camp leading into the Australia Cup. In essence, it was somewhat a new experience for everyone, from the debutantes to the veterans, under new boss Santrac.

"I didn't know what to expect at the camp. Not only was I new, but Adrian was new too, so the other girls couldn't tell me what it'd be like. I just tried to be myself. Obviously Adrian liked the way I play, so I decided not to change anything — do what I'm good at.

It wasn't long before Mann had an inkling she might be amongst the coveted eleven. The Idream became reality, but the occasion didn't at all faze the only starting debutante.

Mann started off in buzzing form, and was terribly unlucky not to make an instant name for herself on the scoresheet four minutes into her international career. A fantastic ball from midfielder Alison Forman picked out Mann waiting unmarked centre of goal alongside a square French defence. Mann controlled with one touch before unleashing a brilliant thunderous drive from the edge of the box, only to see the chance stopped by the keeper.

"The first game I was probably not as nervous as the other two — I don't know why. I knew it was an international match, but I didn't feel it was. I tried to focus on what I had to do, not what was going on, to control my nerves. Before I knew it, I was there playing. That first chance made me more excited, gave me more energy. It certainly gave me more confidence, and relaxed me more into the game."

The rookie presented a headache for the French defence, her trademark never-say-die attitude and non-stop running at the heart of any Australian attack. Mann was effective both in getting in position to strike on goal, and in holding up and laying the ball off to her teammates.

Mann is retained on the start list, somewhat to the newcomer's surprise, particularly after the second match where she suffered a bang in the head, foot problems, and the Lismore heat. "I knew where to go but my feet didn't want to go there. I was surprised I stayed on that long."

April Mann: The emerging face of the Matildas.

It gives her the chance to fulfil one real aim for the tournament — to score a goal. But Mann starts the third and last game where she felt she left off in the second - not at her best. The storm interruption provides a perfect opportunity to start over again and the striker lifts her game. Seven minutes into the second half, Mann celebrates her maiden goal, meeting a top class Sharon Black cross on the run to lob the ball over the keeper.

"It was awesome — my first goal here in my home state in front of family and friends. I didn't actually think it was going in, I thought the goalkeeper was going to save it. It was as if it was in slow motion — the ball went into the top left corner as she was backing into goal. I can still visualise it. Then I remember celebrating. I think one thing I wanted to get out of the Cup was a goal, which I think is important for strikers."

"The goal did drain my energy though. I don't know what it was, as normally I get excited, pumped."

Mann, who works as a lifeguard/indoor sports officer at the Acacia Ridge Splash Leisure Centre, is only a recent convert to the position of striker, having moved forward from her usual midfield role by QAS Coach Mike Mulvey during Brisbane's 1999 premier league season. In the Australia Cup, she played a somewhat different role again to that which she is accustomed, playing as a sole front player with two attacking supports tucked in between her and the midfield.

"As a midfielder you think strikers are lazy. I like my new position, but I still have a lot to learn." Naturally, the girl who first kicked the ball around on the sidelines watching her brother play and was asked to join the Parkridge Panthers by the coach at age six, has now set her sights on even bigger things. But although with her foot now in the door, Mann knows things won't be easy in the near future with new National Coach Ernie Merrick now set to take over the reins starting this week.

"Hopefully this is the start of a bright future," says Mann, reflecting on her unexpected fortunes. "I've always aimed and wished, I've always wanted to play at the highest possible level. Looking to the future, I want to play at the 2003 World Cup and the 2004 Olympics. Between then and now, it's to secure a spot in the Australian Team. But now with a new coach with new rules and new ideas, it'll be a case of starting over again."

COSMOS SIGN-ON JAPANESE STAR

By Graham Cooke

Canberra Cosmos coach Tom Sermanni is confident he has secured the services of star Japanese defender Hiroshi Miyazawa for the rest of the season.

"Hiroshi has seen the contract, and apart from a few minor details he is happy with it," Sermanni said at the end of last week.

"I am confident he will now remain a Cosmos player for the rest of the season.

Miyazawa joined Canberra from J-League club Hiroshima, where he was unable to get a regular first-team place, in November and has played in every game since.

However, his initial contract ran only to the end of January, giving him the option of returning to Japan in time for the new season.

"He is now quite certain his future should lie in Australia; it was only a matter of making the right deal," the coach said.

While Miyazawa is apparently secured, another Cosmos player is on his way out of the club, at least for the time being. Attacking midfielder Alex Castro is leaving this week for Argentina where he will have trials with leading clubs. Castro has long been eager to try his luck overseas and has simply been waiting for the right moment.

Hiroshi Miyazawa

His departure will be a blow for the Cosmos as he was beginning to form an effective midfield partnership with the newly arrived Milton Cortes. However, Sermanni says the player will return to Canberra should the trials not work out.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Match Reports page 10 & 11

ABSW Player of the Year Points

ROUND FIFTEEN

MARCONI V BRISBANE
3 - Renaud (MS)
2 - Harris (BS)
1 - Costanzo (MS)

STH MELB V NORTHERN SPIRIT
3 - Kalogeracos (SM)
2 - Arnold (NS)
1 - Iosifides (SM)

NEWCASTLE V MELB KNIGHTS
3 - R. Vargas (MK)
2 - Marth (MK)
1 - Da Costa (MK)

PERTH GLORY V CANBERRA
3 - Wehrman (PG)
2 - Despotovski (PG)
1 - Konstantinov (CC)

FOOTBALL KINGZ V SYDNEY UNITED
3 - Ibrahim (FK)
2 - Awaritefe (SU)
1 - Rufer (FK)

EASTERN PRIDE V SYDNEY OLYMPIC
3 - Cardozo (SO)
2 - Ki Kim (EP)
1 - Augerinos (SO)

PARRAMATTA POWER
BYE

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

Match Reports page 10 & 11

ABSW Player of the Year Points

ROUND SIXTEEN

NORTHERN SPIRIT V SYDNEY UNITED
3 - Burt (SU)
2 - Pondeljak (SU)
1 - Burgess (NS)

MARCONI STALLIONS V PARRAMATTA
3 - Longo (MS)
2 - Trajanovski (MS)
1 - Tobin (PP)

NEWCASTLE UTD V EASTERN PRIDE
3 - Roberto (NU)
2 - Wilson (NU)
1 - Tsekenis (NU)

FOOTBALL KINGZ V SYDNEY OLYMPIC
3 - Uriovic (FK)
2 - Rufer (FK)
1 - Bolton (SO)

PERTH GLORY V WOLLONGONG
3 - Horsley (WW)
2 - Wehrmann (PG)
1 - Blake (WW)

SOUTH MELBOURNE V ADELAIDE CITY
3 - Susa (SM)
2 - Durakovic (SM)
1 - Lagati (AC)

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS V BRISBANE
3 - Porter (MK)
2 - Harris (BS)
1 - Kiratzogiou (MK)

CANBERRA COSMOS
BYE

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1
ADELAIDE CITY 0

By Alan Clark

South Melbourne extended its lead at the top of the NSL table with a hard-fought single goal victory against Adelaide City at Bob Jane Stadium on Sunday.

South now holds a two-game break over next week's Bob Jane visitors — Perth Glory.

Fausto De Amicis was this game's unlikely scorer. His 30 metre thunderbolt in first-half added time was enough to win the game.

Referee Con Diomis awarded South Melbourne a free-kick about 25 metres out, requiring City's defensive wall to be erected at the edge of the penalty-area. Con Boutsianis sent in a shot which crashed off the wall, and rebounded into space De Amicis ran in to score.

"He makes a habit of doing that," said South coach Mickey Petersen after the game. "He's a left-sided defender, but he's a right-footer, so when he cuts in, he's always capable of that. "In fact, he nailed us in one Final series for the Knights many years ago with one of those, so it's good to have him on our side doing it!"

Adelaide City coach Zoran Matic was upset at the award of the free-kick immediately prior to De Amicis' goal. "If you call that a free-kick, then I'm an idiot," he said after the match.

"You can look at it seven times if you want. There were free-kicks given around our box even if we just blew the air," he complained. "We had some key players who missed passes (which) I can't believe," said Matic. "We haven't played well, that's for sure."

Captain Paul Trimboli had a late opportunity from the penalty-spot to bag the sealer, but Adelaide City keeper Adrian Cagalj made the save.

Lucas Pantelis had fouled Goran Lozanovski as Lozanovski was running in on goal.

"You need insurance in this game, and the second goal would have given us that. At the end of the day we were lucky. Yes we deserved our win, yes we played some good football, we created some good chances. But the suspense is what keeps people coming back," said a philosophical Petersen.

Zeljko Susa (left): South Melbourne's playmaker.

"It's a drama, and today — if you are a South Melbourne supporter — it was drama right to the end."

The 200-game celebrations of City captain Aurelio Vidmar would have been greater but for a post which got in the way of a three-metre shot when the equaliser seemed certain with just seven minutes of play remaining. The move had started from City's first corner — that it was so late in the match was evidence of the effectiveness of the South defence.

The corner was swung in and only partly-cleared before it was swept goalwards again to where Vidmar stood and with space to shoot, with only an overly-exposed Michael Petkovic to beat. Vidmar's shot beat Petkovic, but not the inside of the post before this time, the South defence truly cleared.

Matic declined to single out Vidmar's miss as the most upsetting aspect of the loss. "I don't care if he missed the chance. I don't care if he missed from the goal-line — when we were passing some of the shocking passes I saw today, I nearly went and played myself."

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2
BRISBANE STRIKERS 1

By Bert van Bedaf

A drought was broken and the Melbourne Knights fans could cheer again as their side registered their first win at home in two months, beating Brisbane Strikers 2-1 last Sunday.

The last time the Knights had won at home was in round eight last December, when they beat Eastern Pride also 2-1.

Victory has brought the Knights within a point of the top six. They are a point behind sixth-placed Parramatta and are away to Power on Friday night.

Brisbane, in contrast, is third-bottom. But coach John Kosmina has not given up the fight, just over halfway into the season. "We've got nine games at home and we've got to win them," he said.

Knights coach Vlado Vanis also put great store on his home matches. "We need to win every home game (from now on) to have a chance of making the top six," he said.

If the two sides are to raise their rankings, they'll also need to raise their standard. Their encounter at Somers St didn't exactly sparkle but rather simmered on a low flame.

After a scoreless first half, the Knights struck with a penalty. The Strikers levelled minutes later, but the home side snatched a win with a scrambled goal.

After their 5-1 victory away to Newcastle last week, the Knights were in a winning mood with the knowledge they were nearing a top six position, but they didn't express it with a great deal of fire.

Therefore, despite the win, Vanis said he was disappointed in his team's performance. It had, indeed, been a less than inspiring victory.

"I talked to them at half time and they lifted maybe five to ten per cent, but they didn't lift up to (the level) I expected that they can. I am happy with the result, but I wasn't happy with the performance," he said.

Kosmina said he'd expected to come away with at least a point.

"We should have gotten something out of the game last week (2-1 loss to Marconi) and we copped a soft penalty. I think the penalty today was a bit iffy as well," Kosmina said.

"I thought we basically controlled the game and looked stable most of the time. Had things gone right for us, we could have been one or two goals up.

"I can't complain about the way the team played. I can't complain about their commitment or the type of football we played. We could not have played any better to get a result," he said.

Kosmina said he'd been pleased with the performance of new signing Peter Buljan from Perth Glory. "He did quite well for us. He caused a few problems in the first half," he said.

Brazilian Fernando Rech nearly stole the lead for Brisbane at the knock of half-time, but Knights stopper Sash Ognenovski blocked his shot just outside the box.

Jeremy Harris (right) Melbourne Knights striker holds off Brisbane's Rod Vargas.

The Knights took the lead with a penalty in the 58th minute, when Brisbane captain Stuart McLaren brought down Joel Porter. Referee Mathew Breeze pointed to the spot and Marth converted with a controlled side-foot high into the net.

But the Knights' joy was short-lived. On the hour Rech provided a clever through-ball, which put Harris clear in front of Knights 'keeper Lou Acevski.

Brisbane's liveliest player kept his nerve and coolly slotted the equaliser past Acevski into the right-hand corner.

But the Knights regained the lead in the 77th minute to seal victory and set up a highwire top-six bid next week.

Midfielder Lubo Lapsansky drilled the ball on target, but Strikers' 'keeper Daniel Duke parried his shot. Porter cut it back into the crowded box and atoning for his previous miss Cervinski drilled it through a scramble of defenders into the net for a narrow victory.

NEWCASTLE UNITED 1
EASTERN PRIDE 0

By Greg Danvers

A last minute goal off the boot of Newcastle United striker John Buonavoglia gave United a confidence boost and three valuable points in their 1-0 victory over Eastern Pride at Marathon Stadium on Friday night.

Buonavoglia volleyed home an Esala Masi header from close range after 72nd minute substitute Daniel McBreen Eastern Pride's Dean Fak to concede a corner on the left side.

Anthony Magnacca's corner kick found Masi at the far post. Masi rose above the pack to head down for Buonavoglia.

"On the shots on goal we deserved to win," Newcastle United coach Lee Sterrey said."

But it took forever to come. We fell away a bit in the last 15 minutes and they could have got us if they had played the right ball."

Eastern Pride had several chances with one of their best chances three minutes before the halftime break. Robbie Puca latched onto a cross from the left that had beaten Newcastle United 'keeper Bob Catlin.

United's workaholic defender Andy Roberts was able to head the ball over the crossbar within inches of his own line.

Pride's 71st minute substitute Naum Sekulovski lost a chance on goal in the 90th minute when in a one-on-one situation with

John Buonavoglia Last minute match winner.

Catlin. Newcastle pressed early with Masi, Mark Wilson and Magnacca creating chances before the match settled into a dour and compressed struggle.

Andy Harper released Peter Juchniewicz down the left side in the 31st minute who found Buonavoglia with the pocket-rocket's shot blocked by the legs of Pride 'keeper Bojo Jevdjevic.

"Their win in the last minute just about sums up our year," Eastern Pride coach Jeff Hopkins said." That would be our most organised performance of the season and I thought we played the game quite well.

"We tried to frustrate them which I felt was working. "I've impressed on the lads that they need to maintain their concentration and commitment for the full 90 minutes."

MARCONI STALLIONS 2
PARRAMATTA POWER 1

By Arvind Hickman

Marconi Stallions have shown why they are considered genuine finals contenders following their impressive 2-1 victory over nearest rivals, Parramatta Power at Marconi Stadium on Saturday night.

A crowd of only 3,515 turned up in horrendous weather conditions to witness a scrappy match where genuine chances were few and far between.

Marconi coach, Eddie Krncevic, was pleased with result and believed his team had done enough to deserve the three points.

"I thought we played quite well today, we were quite committed and had quite a few chances. I thought with the number of chances we had today we deserved to win," he said.

Power coach, David Mitchell, was disappointed with the game and in particular the poor start by his chargers.

"Before the game if somebody would have of asked me of a prediction I would have thought, two teams close to each other and a draw. But when you concede a goal in the first two minutes it puts you behind the eight ball," he said.

"I just think we didn't create enough and its one of our worst performances of the season."

The first half saw very few chances on a heavy pitch with Marconi taking an early lead in only the second minute.

Brendon Renaud swung a dangerous cross to the near post and Dominic Longo glanced the ball past a bewildered Andrew Crews in goal.

The Power 'keeper failed to make his presence felt, gifting Longo too much space.

Neither team really threatened for the rest of the half as the difficult conditions suited defenders.

Kris Trajanovski should have put Marconi ahead half way through the second half when the Power defence was caught square. The striker only had to beat Crews but chipped just past the right upright.

The Power looked to have equalised only moments later after a Damien Brown cross was mis-handled by David Aceski, and fell invitingly for Scottsman Joe Miller who slotted home. However the goal was overruled for offside.

Dominic Longo: Marconi's hero-skipper, who scored against Parramatta on Saturday.

A rush of blood then saw Parramatta reduced to ten men after Walter Ardone recklessly tackled Saso Radulovic. Only minutes later Radulovic made the Power pay dearly with a well taken second goal. The substitute ran for 40 yards, muscling past defender Nick Orlic, before placing his shot to the left of the advancing 'keeper.

Parramatta scored a consolation goal in the 89th minute after Hamilton Thorp pounced on a Joe Miller cross to volley into the back of the net.

Marconi now have a four point buffer over the Power and are firmly cemented in the top five.

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE

PERTH GLORY 1
W'GONG WOLVES 1

By Richard Kreider

There haven't been too many memorable moments in Australian soccer. The Socceroos making the 1974 World Cup, a bicentenary win against Argentina in 1988 and a recent victory over Scotland would have to rank amongst the best highlights, while the amazing draw against Iran in 1997 at the MCG is undoubtably one of the unforgettable tragedies of the world game down-under.

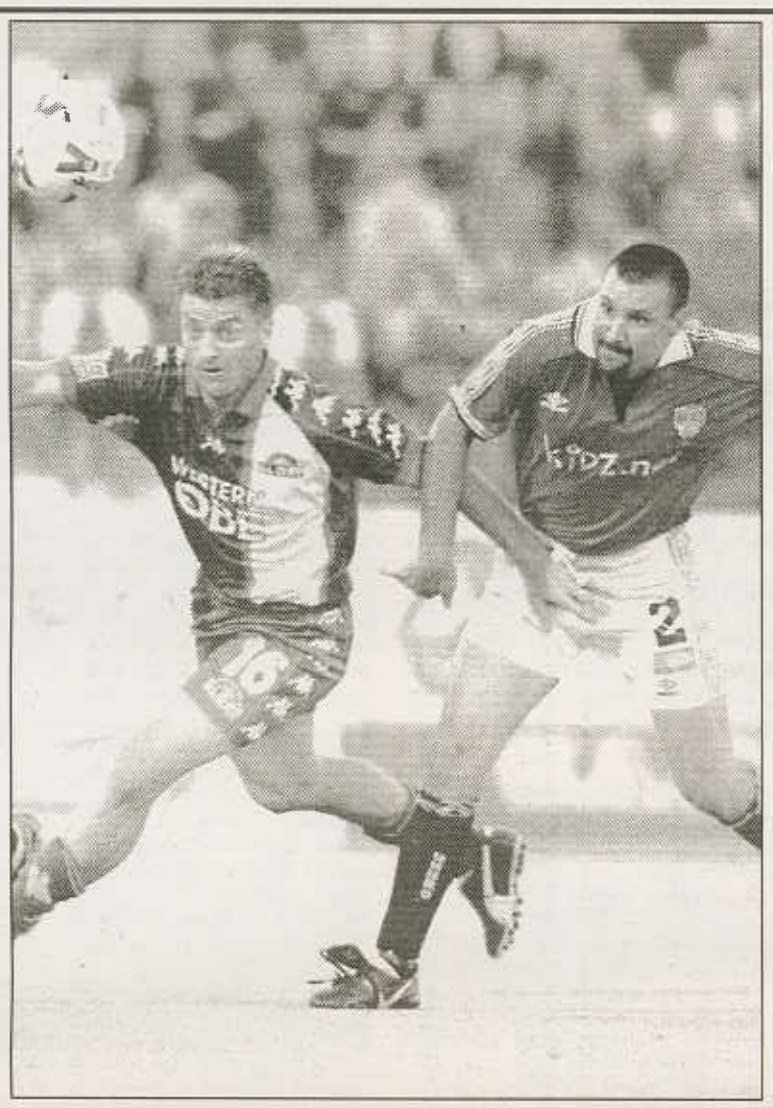
Similarly at club level, Perth Glory's amazing capitulation against the Wollongong Wolves during last season's NSL championship final, followed by a heart-stopping penalty shootout will understandably linger in the memory of every Glory fan for a long time to come.

There was an opportunity to exact some of that revenge last Saturday when the two sides met at Perth Oval, as the Wolves had just completed a successful yet exhaustive Oceania Cup tournament in Papua New Guinea.

A bumper crowd of 16,019, the biggest of the season, was also on hand in anticipation of witnessing another compelling encounter between two attacking sides and to see if the Perth club could earn a little retribution at the same time.

But things didn't go the way they had planned, as the defending champions went a long way to proving they were more than capable of defending their title after very nearly returning home with the three points.

"We wanted to beat the Wolves, but it was not possible," said Glory coach Bernd Stange. "I think both teams deserved a point, us for our forward play and the Wolves for their excellent counter-attacks," said Stange.



Damien Mori (left): Perth Glory's striker jostles for the ball with Wollongong Wolves' towering defender, George Souris.

"People have to accept we can't win every game. The players were running and fighting, but we just couldn't find our rhythm. It was a pity for our big crowd that we couldn't find the target again following that fantastic goal from Jamie (Harnwell)," Stange said.

A breath-taking 30-metre strike from the Glory defender six minutes from time earned his side a cut of the points, when it looked like a piece of Matt Horsley brilliance minutes after the break would secure a plucky win for the travel — weary visitors.

Considering it had been a marathon three weeks for the Wolves, their coach Ron Corry was understandably satisfied with the outcome. "After nine games in 22 days I have to be pleased with the result although Scott (Chipperfield) very nearly stole the game for us in the dying minutes," he said. "We had a few keys players out, but all the boys that played did well and fought very hard," Corry said.

The Wollongong shirts may have had the word Kidz emblazoned on the front, but they certainly weren't playing a kids game out on the pitch following some hard-hitting tackling that either went un-noticed by referee Mark Shield or he chose to award a yellow card to the victim.

Gary Faria had a penalty appeal turned down after he was dumped by Alvin Ceccoli in the 12th minute, Rob Trajkovski was chopped down from behind by Robert Middleby in the 34th which earned nothing but a throw-in and substitute Brad Maloney saw a 57th minute yellow for being tripped from behind on the edge of the box.

Craig Deans, who was making his reappearance in a Glory shirt after leaving the defunct Carlton, made a late challenge on Middleby in the 73rd minute, which forced his departure from the game.

Wollongong started the match with a surprise inclusion in Paul Harries, a former Torquay and Carlisle striker, who showed ample ability but was restricted in using it as he was constantly harassed by Harnwell.

Neither side could lay claim to dominating the other and a goal-less draw was certainly on the cards until Horsley started and finished off a piece of individual magic in the 50th minute.

The Wollongong skipper launched himself into the Glory half from the centre-line and after a one-two, back-heel from Stuart Young, he side-stepped defender Deans on the front of the box before releasing a fierce left-foot strike past Jason Petkovic.

With George Souris and Alvin Ceccoli performing a superb tight-marking role on the league's deadly duo of Bobby Despotovski and Damian Mori, Glory were staring down the barrel of a second home defeat of the season.

But Edgar Junior laid the ball into the path of Harnwell who was all of 35 metres from goal, but that didn't prevent the talented defender from finding the target with an unstoppable missile that justifiably produced a roar of approval from the sizeable crowd.

Just moments earlier a well-executed overhead scissors kick from the stopper required a timely deflection by Chipperfield.

The visitors were unlucky not to steal the win in the closing moments when both Chipperfield and substitute Jay Lucas had strong chances to convert.

FOOTBALL KINGZ 1
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 0

Football Kingz broke their three-month winless drought, by beating third-placed Sydney Olympic 1-0 on a rain-soaked Ericsson Stadium pitch on Friday night in Auckland.

The Kingz now need 30 points from 16 remaining matches to make the play-offs of the National Soccer League.

The home side secured the three-point win, after Mark Burton scored the game's only goal in the second half, thanks to the insight of veteran teammate Wynton Rufer.

After warming the bench for the first half Rufer replaced Dennis Ibrahim, who had a quiet first 45 minutes, making an immediate impact within ten minutes of the second half.

The veteran's vision and sheer skill set up the goal in the 55th minute for the 1-0 lead.

Rufer deceived his marker, and with captain Harry Ngata on his inside and Mark Burton in line with the goal, Rufer laid a pass to Burton who finished off the move.

The game could have been a 2-0 drubbing, but Paul Urlovic threw away an easy penalty in the 70th minute. Urlovic kicked the ball straight to Olympic's goal keeper, Clint Bolton.

Urlovic was tripped by Bolton enroute to scoring the second goal of the evening, prompting the referee to award the penalty in front of the goal.

Bolton was involved in a further skirmish after Urlovic's replacement Tim Stevens, returning to the side after injury, tried to poach the ball from his grip.

Stevens had been on the field less than a minute, before he was on the ground receiving an angry outburst from the Olympic keeper. Bolton's frustration went unbooked, but Stevens' name was recorded.

Sydney Olympic became increasingly aggressive, failing to break through the Kingz defence to level the score. They were forced to play the final ten minutes of the match with as many men after substitute player Sebastian Sinozic found himself taking an early shower. He copped his second yellow card for tripping Urlovic.

The first half saw some intense midfield exchanges, but the Kingz failed to convert any possession gained into points, leaving the field at the break, nil-all.

Clint Bolton: Saved Sydney Olympic from further humiliation with his penalty save.

The combination of wet and slippery conditions with several new players, made the first half an unusually lacklustre affair.

Noah Hickey and Chris Jackson were part of the lineup, tailored to combat the shortness of the Olympic side.

It was Hickey's first start this season and the combination with Urlovic, who returned from an ankle injury, made for a hungry- looking attack up front.

Meanwhile, the Kingz may have produced their first export of their short two-season career in the NSL.

Midfielder Ivan Vicelich has been reported to have signed a contract with Dutch club side, Roda JC Kerkrade for four to five years. The transfer fee is yet to be disclosed.

The Kingz next meet bottom-placed Eastern Pride at Mobil Park on February 3.

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
SYDNEY UNITED 2

By Arvind Hickman

Sydney United beat cross-town rivals Northern Spirit 2-1 in front of 3,731 at North Sydney Oval on a sizzling Friday afternoon.United showed more conviction and passion in a local derby that was unfortunately marred by crowd violence.

Sydney United coach, Alan Hunter, praised the passion of his chargers, highlighting defender Danny Burt's performance.

"Even at 1-0 down I thought we had the better chances and I was confident that we would get back into the game. Our aerial strength paid off in the end and it was a good hard fought battle as far as we were concerned," he said.

"Danny Burt, a credit to him, he epitomises the passion of this club and the sort of hard work that's needed at any level, and certainly at this level. He is a great performer."

Spirit coach, Graham Arnold, was disappointed with his team's performance and believes a lot more hard work is needed in the future.

"I think Sydney United wanted it more than us and that's very disappointing.

We're going to work harder, all you can do is work harder. I think there are plenty of players underachieving in that dressing room," he said.

Both teams started the match off slowly but United should have hit the lead after only ten minutes.Tom Pondeljak was played into space on the right side of the penalty areaand squared the ball accurately for Zlatko Arambasic, whose point blank shot was well parried by Spirit 'keeper Paul Henderson.

Spirit's reply came in the 27th minute when inform striker Ben Burgess headed home his ninth goal of the season from a Gabriel Mendez free-kick.

Only ten minutes later ,United found the equaliser via another set piece and some sloppy Spirit defending. Pondeljak provided a dangerous corner ball for Arambasic to head past three Spirit defenders into the back off the net.

Sydney United began the second half where they left off the first by scoring in the 55th minute from yet another set piece. Pondeljak again whipped in a deadly accurate ball from a free kick which Danny Burt headed into the back of the net despite Paul Henderson's best efforts in getting a touch.

Northern Spirit were then dealt another killer blow when Matthew Bingley was sent off for an incident in backplay in the 68th minute.

Danny Burt (left) tries to escape from the clutches of Sydney United's Scott Thomas.

Has Olympic the Spirit to reclaim form?

Ante Juric: Olympic captain.

By John Economos

SYDNEY OLYMPIC following their shock 1-0 loss last Friday night against the Kingz in Auckland, will be striving to get back on the winning trail with a far better disciplined display if they want maximum League points from their battle against the Northern Spirit.

Clint Bolton: Sydney Olympic goalkeeper.

The Kiwis who scored a sole goal through Mark Burton, thoroughly deserved their 1-0 win and had it not been for the brilliant display of goalie Clint Bolton, Olympic's defeat could have easily been so much more severe.

The Sydney side that led the League for much of the season, has slipped of late, dropping valuable points against lesser illustrious sides.

Against the Kingz, Olympic's major problem was in its midfield which offered little resistance to the robust Kiwi midfielders that ran at them.

Olympic seems to have too many technical and attacking players stretched across its middle line that previously had rarely been tested.

Other than tenacious midfielder Paul Kohler, Olympic seems to have a real dearth of ball winners.

Central marker Sebastian Sinozic who came off the bench against the Kingz, copped two yellow cards that now sees him automatically suspended for Sunday.

Robust midfielder, Damon Collina is almost certain to start as a marker again this Sunday against the Northern Spirit.

The Spirit that has won only half of the matches that Olympic has, has been strengthened by the recent signing of Marconi's industrious midfielder Mike Smith.

Smith who made his début last Friday night for the Spirit against Sydney United, filled in the role of sweeper.

Gabriel Mendez: Former Sydney Olympic playmaker now at Spirit.

Sydney Olympic vs Northern Spirit

Sunday 4th February

AT THE

BELMORE SPORTS GROUND

MAIN GAME — KICK OFF 6.30PM ● YOUTH LEAGUE 4PM

Branko Culina | Ante Juric | Pablo Cardozo | Nick Carle | Matthew Langdon | Gabriel Mendez | Graham Arnold

Sydney Olympic, *is proudly sponsored by* **DAINTREE RESTAURANT**

Top Two Set For Titanic Clash

By John Economos

South Melbourne this Sunday is expecting another bumper gate when it plays hosts to the Perth Glory at the Bob Jane Stadium in the vital clash between the two NSL table-toppers.

Mickey Petersen's high flying Souths last Sunday night edged even further ahead on the League ladder when they downed Adelaide City 1-0 whilst second placed Perth Glory barely scrambled to a 1-1 draw with the visiting and current League champions, Wollongong.

Rookie coach Petersen has done a marvellous job to date since taking over Souths during the last off-season.

The 37 year old Petersen and former Souths' playmaker, stated to ABSW last night: "Sunday's match will be a super attraction as it really is going to be a battle between the League's two top goalscoring teams.

"Having said this we will be showing respect to the Glory as after all they beat us 1-0 in Round 2.

"In that match we suffered many injuries plus had midfielder Steve Panopoulos sent off. On top of all this, we also missed a penalty."

Petersen went on to recall of that match: "After it was all over, all of my players felt very hollow for many nights to come.

Michael Petkovic: South Melbourne's keeper, highly admired by coach Mickey Peterson.

Mickey Petersen: Souths' coach and the League's youngest.

"We have been talking about that defeat all season and now we are keenly looking forward to meeting the Glory again this Sunday."

Petersen then switched to pay some special respect to his own defenders.

"Our back four has been tremendous this season. We have conceded just nine goals in 16 games and in the last 630 minutes of football we have conceded just one goal," Petersen praised.

Unyielding defenders in Alan Clarkson, Mehmet Durakovic, Patrick Kisnorbo and Fausto De Amicis have been sterling soldiers for Souths.

This is an excellent combination, a cocktail mix of youth and experience.

But despite Souths having such a tight 'flat-four' defence, it has not detracted the Victorians from playing bright attacking Soccer that has yielded them handsome dividends in scoring 32 goals, the second highest in the League.

Last weekend ironically it took two defenders that scored the respective goals for these two teams.

Souths' left defender, Fausto De Amicis, nailed the target one minute into stoppage time of the first session that yielded all three League points for the Victorians whilst central defender Jamie Harnwell scored a 40 metre screamer six minutes from fulltime to grab a 1-1 draw for Glory against the Wollongong Wolves.

Patrick Kisnorbo: Central marker and Youth International.

Coach's Tribute

Petersen refuses to accept all the credit for Souths' outstanding success at the halfway mark.

"Look, everybody at this Club has had a job to do. And everybody from the top to the bottom has been doing their stuff extremely well, and that's why we have been doing so very well.

"As for all the squad players, they have been putting in the full effort. I've been lucky that most of them have also been my mates.

"They are an excellent role model. This is something that you can't buy, especially the spirit and solid character.

"I'm very proud of them all. I've been also lucky to have played for this Club for a decade and now I'm coaching the team," Petersen proudly stated.

The League's youngest coach, (35 years), failed not to pay special tribute to his young goalkeeper, Michael Petkovic.

"Michael has such excellent hands and vision. Coming out for crosses he takes them with absolute ease and looks so comfortable. He's a joy to work with.

"Overall I'm very pleased with everyone.

"At the beginning of the season people were calling us 'Dad's Army'.

"But being fulltime has been great as we have been able to lift our levels of fitness and all the boys have been putting in the effort.

SOUTH MELBOURNE vs PERTH GLORY

Sunday 4th February

BOB JANE STADIUM

MAIN GAME — KICK OFF 5.00PM

Paul Trimboli

David Clarkson

WATCH Australia's BEST South Melbourne BOUND FOR GLORY

Simon Colosimo

Vas Kalogeracos

Goran Lozanovski

Con Boutsianis

South Melbourne, proudly sponsored by Bank of Cyprus Australia.

Letters to the Editor

IN PRAISE OF SLATER

Dear Sir,

I was reading *The Telegraph* and was amazed, astonished, flabbergasted even — to read of Soccer Australia's action over Robbie Slater's comments.

Firstly — this is supposed to be a land of free speech.

Secondly — If any person or body of persons have brought the game into disrepute — it has to be Soccer Australia.

WITNESS — the four month plus farce — awaiting their decision over Newcastle (decision handed down 2 weeks before season kick off after months of procrastination) WITNESS — the Carlton outcome — admittedly swift by S.A. standards. WITNESS — the delays over the new structure of the National League where minds seem to change week by week.

Note, for such forceful administative gems — new owners/consortiums are charged $250,000 plus annual fees.

Speak up Robbie & others for we the humble fans in the street are well aware — who is bringing the game into disrepute and its not Robbie Slater.

Roy Lowe,
Newcastle. West.

Robbie Slater: In the eye of the storm.

CANBERRA NEEDS SA'S SUPPORT

Dear Sir,

When are the Powers that be at the beautiful game, "Soccer Australia" going to wake up to the fact that it is up to them to awaken the sleeping giant and promote the game instead of throwing the onus on to the clubs in the NSL?

Living in Canberra one can see the difference between the various codes and the media and TV brainwashing the "NSWRL" aided by a federal sports minister with a white board and the two media owners, poured millions into spreading the tentacles at League through the Raiders into the ACT Rugby Union with its Super 12 and a bunch of misfits from heither and thether and continual whinges that the grass at Bruce is too hard for the delicate knee at Brumbies players have pushed an English public school game into the biggest crowd puller at Bruce.

Meanwhile as the "Cosmos", battle for support, Canberra has the largest registration of junior soccer players at all the codes, do they get free tickets to home games not on your nollie; do burns lay on a service from the largest supporters on the South side not on your life; can you get any results for "Cosmos" away games on commercial radio?

No way do the "Cosmos" get more than four minutes free to air TV coverage?

some hope and why? because "Soccer Australia" sees no reason to lay out a few dollars to ensure that what is potentially with its large European-Anglo migration population, one place screaming for a successful soccer team, but what does Soccer Australia do.

Absolutely nothing to promote the game but a lot of rules and regulations for next season as viewed from an air conditioned plush office, but zero; zlich to take a leaf from the League and Union and as in Perth, subject the fans in Canberra to a reason for supporting the World game, and let the clubs put results on the park and not continually looking over their shoulder to see if the coalie monster is going to devour them.

Vic Heath,
Duffy. ACT.

Jay Lucas: One of Australia's latest Soccer export to Europe.

MORE EXPORTS GOOD FOR AUSSIE SOCCER

Dear Sir,

Recently there has been much comment about the number of young Oz soccer players supposedly trying their luck overseas too soon.

In recent years there has been a season change in the attitude of young Oz soccer players. Previously soccer had been a huge recreational game in NSW and Qld for boys between the ages of 6 to 15 years.

The Granville Junior Association is over 90 year old. As they entered their teenage years most boys would exit soccer for other pursuits with most of the talented ones poached by cricket, rugby league or union.

Very few would preserve with soccer for numerous reasons and to this day this attitude is still widespread in Qld.

Generally and especially in NSW, today's young soccer players have been inspired by the likes of Kewell, Viduka, Bosnich, etc.

They are much more serious about soccer than their predecessors as well as having alot more self belief in their ability to make it in the big time. Poaching of talented young soccer players other sports is declining dramatically.

Nothing underlines the change in attitude by today's young players than in certain elite private schools where there are a number of serious soccer players with career ambitions.

The current situation despite its deficiencies is a marked improvement on the previous situation where most talented young Oz players were either lost to other sports or never reached their true potential in the limited confines of Oz soccer.

R. Melor,
Bondi, NSW.

WOLVES CAN SHINE IN SPAIN

Dear Sir,

Like their NSL Grand Final victory over Perth, the Wolves appearance at the World Club championship in Spain is one of those all too rare good news Oz soccer stories.

Here we have a rather unfashionable provincial NSL club (a team of battlers) mixing it with the Elite of World Football.

While some of the players got lucky by being in the right place at the right time. For the majority of long time Wolves players who have toiled for modest rewards without much recognition this really is their wildest dream come true. Without doubt the tournament in Spain will be one of the greatest moments in their lives and I hope they all seize the moment and make the most of it. The only way to top this experience would be if the Wolves caused an upset by beating or holding one of the worlds great clubs.

It would also be nice to think that the management of the Wolves would use the largesse that the World Club Championship will deliver effectively to strengthen the club and soccer position in the South Coast region. I for one will not be holding my breath in anticipation of a such an outcome.

R. Melor,
Bondi. NSW.

Wollongong Wolves memories of last year's historic NSL triumph over Perth Glory.

SOCCER FANS DEMAND ACCOUNTABILITY

Dear Sir,

Who does the media answer to? Who does Soccer Australia answer to?

This is the question I find asking myself regularly. Although a little late, I'd like to remind readers of a situation that occurred only a short while ago.

As the president of a group of fans pushing for better Soccer coverage from Channel Seven, STAND, (Seven Talks And Never Delivers) wrote to ABSW asking it to publish articles on our movement.

Basil Scarsella: SA President

ABSW published and included in letters written to the editor. I draw comparisons from letters we have written to Soccer Australia, we have never received a reply from Soccer Australia to date.

Does Soccer Australia think that by replying to our letter might somehow jeopardize their relationship with Channel Seven? Quite frankly who cares.

Has Channel Seven wondered how telecasting Soccer at 12.15 am ever going to jeopardize its relationship with the fans?

Well I say to Soccer Australia that you answer to us the fans, it is our money we spend at the gates for which you receive commission. Get your priorities right or be held responsible for your actions.

To ABSW I can only say well done.

For more info on STAND check out the our web site standupforsoccer@hotmail.com

NSW Premier League

ROUND 11

Blacktown maintains unbeaten record

Blacktown City Demons	6
Parramatta Eagles	3

By Don O'Regan

The torrential downpour that began just before kick-off and lasted throughout the first half was a sign of things to come as the goals rained in at the Blacktown City Demons, Parramatta Eagles fixture at the Gabbie Stadium last Saturday evening.

Nine goals, thrills and spills galore and Blacktown's equalling of the 30 consecutive unbeaten games record, jointly held by Hakoah and Croatia Sydney, were just reward for the 1,000 plus crowd that braved the inclement conditions.

The Eagles had come into the match on the back of five wins and, as the form team of the NSW Premier League, were expecting to give the reigning Champions a run for their money.

It was not be however and although Parramatta enjoyed periods of control they were eventually overrun by the well-disciplined Blacktown outfit. As City coach Brian Brown enthused after the match, "if there is a secret to our success, it's having a strong, settled and happy squad of players.

If you looked at my bench tonight with the likes of Gatt, Racker, Angievski and Mikoutski, it gives me plenty of options during a game and with Sermanni back from injury next week and Donev expected back soon after, the competition for places is high. We've also got players in the reserve grade who are knocking on the door and this can only be good for the team."

John Crawley in the Demons' goal maintained his side's early advantage, twice foiling Anthony Mittiga's firmly struck volleys by diving full length to palm the ball away from goal.

With a slice of luck City's livewire marksman Darren Iocca might have had a hatful of goals in the sodden conditions but in the end he had to settle for a pair, the first coming in the 27th minute when he side-footed home Blacktown's second goal from Damon Langan's cross.

The Eagles were not dispirited though and fought hard to get back in the game with Ben Delicata and Mittiga starring as the visitors tried to find a weakness. Their efforts paid off in the 37th minute when delicate floated in a cross for Adam Anderson to finish.

Eight minutes into the second half and Delicata was involved again, this time playing Ballamodou Conde into space but the enigmatic midfielder was foiled by Crawley who raced off his line to block the shot.

Three minutes later however Crawley was left stranded as Mittiga capped a fine showing with a superb solo efforts, printing down the left flank before cutting inside and lashing the ball into the goal.

With goal attempts coming thick and fast from both teams, Blacktown eventually inched ahead in the 70th minute when Iocca headed in his twelfth goal of the campaign after a short corner move from Dee and substitute Vadim Mikoutski. City's second substitute, Robert Angievski, had a hand in the fourth goal in the 77th minute when he set up man-of-the-match Steve Riches to belt home his second of the season, and Angievski was on hand again in the 81st minute to claim a goal for himself, slamming home a blocked shot from Iocca.

The game was effectively over at this point but still the Demons pushed forward with Jimmy Aschner taking advantage of a cross from his striking partner Iocca, coolly stabbing the ball over the line for Blacktown's sixth in the 84th minute.

Darren Iocca: He scored twice.

The Eagles were still not out of it though and secured a consolation goal with one minute remaining after Mauricio Islas' cross found an unmarked tom Bazdaric on the far post, Bazdaric rising to head the ball into goal.

Tam Finlayson's Eagles still look good for a top four spot but with a comfortable seven point buffer the Demons look a certainty to take out the League Championship.

Bonnyrigg cage Panthers

Penrith Panthers	2
Bonnyrigg W.E.	3

By Greg Stock

Bonnyrigg made it two wins in a row accounting for a spirited Penrith on a wet Andrews Road Field. Dominating the first half, Bonnyrigg allowed the Panthers back into the match in the second half, and if it wasn't for an 83rd minute penalty, put away by David Harding, they could have well been in some trouble.

While Penrith also had an early chance via a Glenn Meilak free-kick, it was Johnny Ghisso who finally got the scoreboard moving in the 28th minute with an individual piece of magic.

Trapping the ball in the far right hand corner of the ten-yard box, Ghisso dropped the ball onto his left foot and steered his shot towards the right hand upright.

The ball evaded the diving Chad Taylor and nestled neatly in the top right-hand corner.

Ghisso was at it again ten minutes later when a mazy run by White Eagles skipper Javier Mancino was met by Ghisso at the back post. His first time shot was blocked by the diving Taylor, but not completely to stop the ball trailing away across the goal line.

In the 52nd minute, the Panthers new signing Glenn Meilak pushed forward.

Trying his luck with a short cross Meilak was inch perfect, finding the head of O'Connell, as he directed his effort well wide of the stranded Fernando Greco.

With just eight minutes remaining, the game literally turned on its head. After being under pressure from the hard-running Panthers, Michael Hawrysiuk broke out of the Bonnyrigg half on a run into the Panthers defence. Stopper David Gardiner, pushed Hawrysiuk wide but in the tackle, referee Mark Hester deemed Gardiner had committed a foul on Hawrysiuk and awarded the penalty.

Up stepped David Harding who made no mistake with his shot. The Panthers were further reduced to just ten men when

Fernando Greco

the experienced Anthony Driene disputed the penalty and he was shown the red card.

Even at 3-1 down the Panthers were not yet finished. Substitute striker Osvaldo El Ali got on the end of a Danny Hinton cross to make the score 3-2 but with just a minute of time remaining, Bonnyrigg were happy just to control possession and play out the time for a win.

WRAP-UP

St George 0 Leichhardt 1

Leichhardt and St George came into this match on the back of losses in the previous round and both needed the points to re-ignite their season. Overall it was a scrappy game and there were only two major incidents.

A well-taken goal by Adioski for Leichhardt and a controversial incident where a St George equaliser was disallowed after some indecision by the linesman.

Though Leichhardt had the better of the game, neither team showed signs that they will be moving up the table and challenging the front-runners in the competition.

Central Coast 2 C'bury-M'ville 1

Central Coast has sounded a warning to its nine competitors in the NSW Premier League following a clinical 2-1 victory against the in-form Canterbury-Marrickville Olympic at a wet Pluim Park.

Coasties skipper Shane Knight gave his side the lead after drilling a low left-foot shot past Jose Bello-Amigo.

Mick Williams fired over Bello-Amigo early in the second-half to extend the Coasties lead and only a 20 metre free-kick from Con Paradisis on the final whistle marred a thoroughly professional performance from Central Coast.

Sutherland 2 Belconnen 2

An 81st minute equaliser from Belconnen substitute Matt Julienne denied Sutherland their first win of the season. A fairly tame first-half was enlivened only by flashes of skill from Steve Lazzari and it was he who set up the only goal of the first stanza after he released Mark Jenkins who finished smartly.

The second-half by contrast was all action and could have resulted in any number of goals for either team. Goals to Colin McAusland and a first for the club for Dean Spresian in the space of just seven minutes midway through the second-half seemed to be enough for the Sharks before Julienne's last goal.

• RESULTS •

ROUND 11

St George	0	Leichhardt (Adioski 24m)	1
Penrith (O'Connell 52'm, El Ali 89m)	2	Bonnyrigg (Ghisso 28m, 38m, Harding 83m pen)	3
Blacktown City (Foxe 1m, Iocca 27 & 70m, Riches 77m, Angievski 81m, Aschner 84m)	6	Parramatta Eagles (Anderson 37m, Mittiga 56m, Bazdaric 89m)	3
Sutherland (McAusland 61m, Spresian 68m)	2	Belconnen (Jenkins 27m, Julienne 81m)	2
Central Coast (Knight 35m, Williams 58m)	2	Canterbury M'ville (Paradisis 90m)	1

• TOP SCORERS •

AFTER ROUND 11

Player	Club	Goals
Darren Iocca	BLACKTOWN	12
Steve Lazzari	BELCONNEN	11
Javier Mancino	BONNYRIGG W.E.	6
Danial Cummins	PARRAMATTA EAGLES	6

NSW PREMIER LEAGUE LADDER

(AFTER ROUND 11)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Blacktown City	11	9	2	0	29	11	29
Parramatta Eagles	11	7	1	3	25	20	22
Bonnyrigg	11	6	3	2	28	14	21
Leichhardt	11	5	1	5	23	20	16
Belconnen	11	5	1	5	22	19	16
C'bury-M'ville	11	5	1	5	17	17	16
St George	11	5	1	5	16	18	16
Central Coast	11	5	0	6	12	13	15
Sutherland	11	0	4	7	8	26	4
Penrith	11	0	2	9	8	30	2

For further information see: www.nswpremierleague.com

NSW Premier League

www.nswpremierleague.com

ROUND 12

FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY

C'bury M'ville v Bonnyrigg W.E. — HENSON PARK
Under 19s: 6.00pm — First Grade: 8.00pm

SATURDAY 3 FEBRUARY

Blacktown City v Belconnen — GABBIE STADIUM
Under 19s: 4.30pm — First Grade: 6.30pm

Sutherland Sharks v Penrith — SEYMOUR SHAW
Under 19s: 5.00pm — First Grade: 7.00pm

SUNDAY 4 FEBRUARY

Leichhardt Tigers v Central Coast — LAMBERT PARK
Parramatta Eagles v St George — MELITA STADIUM
Under 19s: 4.30pm — First Grade: 6.30pm

Catch up with all the latest news on the NSW Premier League and other NSW Soccer news

● 'Soccer Saturday' on *Radio 2SER-FM (107.3)* from 11am-12pm every Saturday

Official clothing supplier to NSWSF

www.soccernsw.com.au

KELLY CROSS OFF TO AMERICA

Kelly Cross, one of Australia's leading youth developers, has been chosen to represent Australia in the up coming coaches' convention in America.

Ideally called the National Soccer Coaches Association of America, this organisation is the largest held for any other coaching event in the world.

Asked about his up and coming adventure to the States, Cross feels very keen that Australia will be most looked at from this seminar. "Currently on the world stage, Australia is one of the most-looked- at countries in terms of youth development. Other countries have noticed our recent boom in producing quality youth players, and with the seminar that I'll be conducting at the convention, other coaches will have more knowledge on how our system works,"said Cross.

The convention will be held in Indianapolis where some 4,000 coaches from across the world will attend. It will be a five-day seminar where technical, tactical and also practical work will be shown to all participating coaches through various lectures.

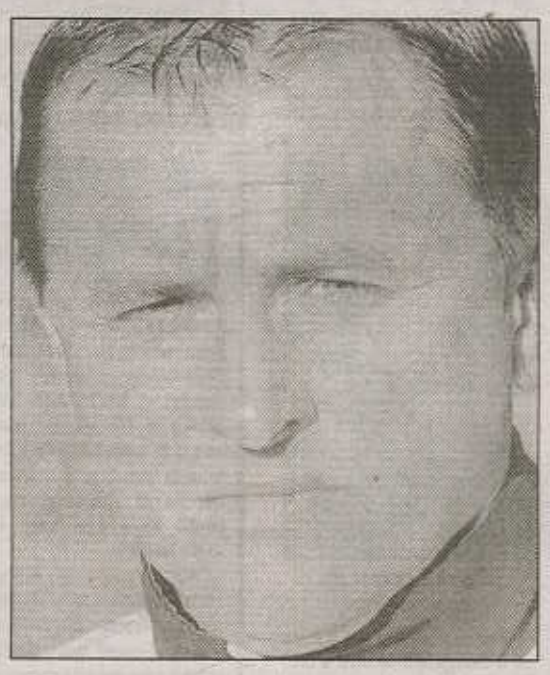
"The beauty of having so many coaches from around the world means that each coach has his own individual style, and countries have their own ways of developing youth players.

"I'll be showing the coaches how the Institute works, how we identify young talent at a young age then pushing them further up the scale, our Coerver coaching and all the video analysis and media training we show and teach the youth players.

"Basically everyone is interested how Kewell and Emerton were developed. They are also very curious about how in the last Joey squad in '99, seven players were selected from NSW," said Kelly.

Also accompanying Cross at the convention will be two men who have served their countries well.

"Brazilian coach and winner of the '94 World Cup Carlos Alberto Parriera and current French national coach Roger Lemmere will also be attending the convention. It will be a good opportunity for myself to check out these coaches and see what styles and ways of teachings they bring to the game," said Cross.



Kelly Cross: Going to the United States of America.

Head coach of the NSW ITC for many years now, Kelly's team this year is a much younger squad than previous ones.

"This season we've decided to sign and develop players as young as fourteen, so that we can mould them into a complete soccer player. It's no secret that we field the youngest team in the National Youth League but we have pulled in some great results and without the help of senior players, the lads have done quite well.

Basically the introduction of young players like Stefan Del Zio from Blacktown, Jacob Timpano from the Wolves, Richie Cardozo from Olympic and many more ITC youngsters are all guided towards the 2003 Joeys squad.

"These three players mentioned are 14 years old who have signed full scholarships with the side, also having game time and even getting on the score sheet which was a huge bonus.

"Most players that participate in the National Youth League are born in '81, most of our boys are in the '85-86' bracket meaning most are five years younger than their opposition," said the former Joeys Assistant.

"Having done a FA Coaching course and obtaining a Physical Education degree, Kelly is one of the most equipped youth coaches in the world. Asked about his absence for the week, Cross believes his squad will do well against Sydney United Youth team.

"With my absence, I have full faith in assistant coach George Fallah to do well. The coaching staff of, Cheryl Burns our Physio and John Crawley our Goalkeeper coach are quality assets to the side as well. You need professional people to keep a squad going and that is what we have at the ITC," said Cross.

So many youngsters are leaving the shores of Australia, and making their names overseas, Cross believes it's not always the best alternative to go at a really young age.

"It's really hard to stop the youngsters from leaving, of course it's great to play overseas but some youngsters who gain scholarships overseas don't always make the right move.

"In Australia, up to the ages of 17, we are as good as anyone else in the world, we have quality youth programs that many other countries look towards. In my opinion, a player should make a name for himself here first then go overseas as a full professional," said Kelly.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEAGUE

SOUTHERN DIVISION - RD 14

LEADING SCORERS

Name	Team	Goals
Steve Manceski	South Melbourne	18
Nick Waite	Peninsula Blues	12
Denis Mustac	Eastern Pride	11
Brett Cunningham	Fawkner Blues	9
Viktor Memeti	South Dandenong	9
Daniel Debevc	Carlton	8

LEAGUE LADDER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Eastern Pride	13	11	0	2	47	11	33
Sth Melb Institute	12	10	0	2	66	18	30
Melbourne Knights	13	10	0	3	41	16	30
VIS	14	8	1	5	31	25	25
Peninsula Blues	12	8	0	4	35	16	24
Sth Melb Academy	11	6	1	4	23	20	19
Melb Knights Academy	12	6	0	6	18	23	18
South Dandenong	11	5	2	4	18	17	17
Albury Wodonga	13	3	2	8	14	34	11
Bulleen Zebras	14	2	4	8	20	36	10
Fawkner Blues	13	3	1	9	20	42	10
Green Gully Cavaliers	12	2	3	7	13	26	9
Preston Lions	12	0	0	12	9	71	0

By Roy Hay

Fawkner Blues 2 Peninsula Blues 3

Peninsula Blues recorded a 2-3 away win over Fawkner Blues, but it was not a great game. Caleb Nicholls put the Peninsula Blues in front after seven minutes, and Luke Vittari made it two in the 28th minutes but Brett Cunningham's ninth goal of the season pulled one back for Fawkner.

Nicholls restored the Peninsula Blues advantage in the 41st minute.

Ross Lagana's strike in 70 minutes made sure that Fawkner was back in the hunt for the last stages, but it could not produce an equalizer..

VIS 2 Melb Knights Academy 0

Two goals by Serkan Oksuz in the second half gave the VIS its win over Melbourne Knights Academy. The Academy was unlucky, hitting the woodwork twice and generally taking the game to the VIS.

Preston Lions 1 Melbourne Knights 5

Melbourne Knights accounted for Preston Lions by five goals to one at Connor Reserve on Saturday.

The young Lions took the lead in the first half when Vasilj Ristovski scored after 29 minutes, but Xzehair Suleimani, in his second game for the Knights youth side, scored a hat-trick in 44, 68 and 77 minutes. Adam Petko and Ben Cogger scored the others for the Knights in 65 and 83 minutes respectively

South Dandenong 1 Eastern Pride 2

Milos Petrevski scored for the Pride after only five minutes and Fitim Ibraimi equalized midway through the first half. Eastern Pride had a player sent off early in the second half and it was not till the 73rd minute that Simon Webster scored what proved to be the winner.

Sth Melbourne 4 Albury Wodonga 1

In the late game on Sunday night, South Melbourne beat Albury Wodonga by four goals to one at Bob Jane Stadium.

The South goals came from Vince Lia with two, Steve Manceski and Andy Vlahos. The Albury scorer was not available at time of writing.

Fawkner Blues 3 Bulleen Zebras 2

Milan Sajkic got an early goal in six minutes for the Blues and scored again two minutes into the second half. Then the Zebras came roaring back with two goals by Ricky Catalano in 53 and 58 minutes.

But Fawkner was not to be denied and Michael Amadeo converted a penalty in 78 minutes to give the Blues the victory.

ROUND 13 RESULTS

Wednesday 24 January 2001
Fawkner Blues 2 (Brett Cunningham, Ross Lagana)
Peninsula Blues 3 (Caleb Nicholls 2, Luke Vittari)

ROUND 14 RESULTS

Saturday 27 January 2001
VIS 2 Melbourne (Serkan Oksuz 2)
Knights Academy 0

Preston Lions 1 (Vasily Ristovski)
Melbourne Knights 5
(Xhezair Suleimani 3, Ben Cogger, Adam Petko)

Sunday 28 January 2001
South Melbourne 4
(Vince Lia 2, Steve Manceski, Andy Vlahos)
Albury-Wodonga 1 (Scorer not available)

Fawkner Blues 3 (Milan Sajkic 2, Michael Amadeo)
Bulleen Zebras 2 (Ricky Catalano 2)

South Dandenong 1 (Fitim Ibraimi)
Eastern Pride 2 (Milos Petrevski, Simon Webster)

Bye v Peninsula Blues Bye v Green Gully
Bye v South Melbourne Eagles Academy

NORTHERN DIVISION - RD 16

DEFERRED MATCH FROM ROUND 6 — PLAYED ON WEDNESDAY 24/01/01

Parramatta Power ..... 1 **Wollongong Wolves**..... 0
(Berry 89)

FRIDAY 26 JANUARY 2001

NSWIS..... 1 **Sydney Olympic Youth** ... 6
(Stavroulakis 72) *(Sarr 19, McCallister 33, 86, Caravella 56, 88, Goutzioulis 60)*

Newcastle Utd Youth .... 1 **Newcastle Utd Colts** 0
(Provost 56)

SATURDAY 27 JANUARY 2001

Northern Spirit ..... 2 **Sydney United** 4
(Majurovski 31, 75,) *(Own goal 35, Jedinak 57, Picken 69, Pearson 89)*

AIS..... 1 **Marconi Stallions Colts**... 2
(Wells 78) *(Rohrer 2, Madigan 52)*

SUNDAY 28 JANUARY 2001

ACT Academy ..... 0 Wollongong Wolves 3
(Austin 69, Kencevski 72, Andronopoulos 80)

Marconi Stallions Youth . 0 **Parramatta Power**..... 1
(Brown 19)

Sydney Oly Academy .... 2 **QAS**..... 1
(Haliti 36, Palmer 88) *(Miner 28)*

Bye — Canberra Cosmos

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A	Pts
A.I.S.	15	11	2	1	2	36	15	35
Marconi Stallions	14	10	2	1	2	34	8	32
Parramatta Power	15	10	1	1	4	44	20	31
Wollongong Wolves	14	7	4	1	3	31	14	25
Northern Spirit	13	8	1	1	4	29	17	25
Newcastle United	14	8	1	1	5	23	14	25
Sydney Olympic	14	7	2	1	5	34	27	23
Sydney United	15	7	1	1	7	31	30	22
Marconi Colts	15	7	0	1	8	34	26	21
N.S.W.I.S.	15	6	2	1	7	19	31	20
Canberra Cosmos	14	5	3	2	6	29	25	18
Q.A.S.	15	5	1	1	9	23	41	16
Sydney OlyAcademy	14	2	3	1	9	16	31	9
ACT Academy	15	1	1	1	13	7	56	4
Newcastle Utd Colts	12	1	0	1	11	6	36	3

ROBERTO CARLOS RATES RIVALDO OVER FIGO

Roberto Carlos: Rates fellow-Brazilian Rivaldo over Real teammate, Luis Figo.

Real Madrid defender Roberto Carlos says he rates fellow Brazilian Rivaldo of Barcelona ahead of Portuguese team mate Luis Figo.

"Between the two players, I think I'd go for Rivaldo because he's Brazilian," Roberto Carlos said in an interview with Spanish news agency Europa Press.

"Figo knows I've got enormous respect for him but Rivaldo is a player I like a lot." Roberto Carlos has been left out of the Brazil team in recent games but the fullback said he was not concerned.

"The less said about the national team situation the better," he said.

"There's a new coach at the moment. I'm very happy here.

Playing well here will open the doors for me.

"If they've left me out for two or three games it's to try out someone else. It's not something that worries me.

"I wouldn't say it's a great objective of mine (to get back in the side). I've had nine years in the national team and I've experienced a lot."

But he had harsh words for those back home who criticise Brazilians playing in Europe. "Being a success in Europe bothers a lot of people in Brazil," he said. "Look what's happened to Rivaldo. People think that if you've been world number one you don't need to play for the national team or you lose your love for the shirt.

"People want trouble. They want to talk about you, but not the good things."

Roberto Carlos, who says he still wants to finish his career in Brazil, refused to rule out moving to another Spanish club.

"If I said I'd never move elsewhere in Spain that might be a lie. I'd leave Real Madrid if the people decided they didn't want me any more. "As for Barcelona, there's a 99 precent chance that I won't go there."

Rivaldo: Rated highly by Carlos.

AC MILAN GRABS GEORGIAN STAR

Georgian winger Kakha Kaladze said he has signed a 4-1/2-year contract with ACMilan.

"I'm very happy with the deal I got here," the 22-year-old international told Reuters by telephone from Milan.

"I will do my best to make Milan's first team because I'm the kind of player who does not like to sit on the bench.

"I've already talked to (former Dynamo Kiev team mate) Andriy Shevchenko, a very good friend of mine, who assured me if I work hard I should have a great future here."

Ukrainian champions Dynamo Kiev said earlier in the week that they had transferred Kaladze to Milan for an undisclosed sum.

A spokesman for Dynamo said they had agreed to the transfer because Kaladze, who was already in Milan for medical checks, had made clear he wanted to leave, denting the team's morale.

Kaladze signed a four-year deal with Dynamo in 1997.

Kakha Kaladze: Bound for AC Milan.

INTER MILAN BACKS TARDELLI

Inter Milan have denied that coach Marco Tardelli's future at the club is at risk but have confirmed they want to sign Paris Saint Germain midfielder Stephane Dalmat.

Inter's defeat to Lazio penultimate Saturday left them hovering just four points above the relegation zone and there has been speculation that Tardelli, who took over from Marcello Lippi one game into the Serie A campaign, could be in danger.

Some media reports have suggested Lippi could return if Inter's results do not improve and there have also been claims that Inter have already approached Valencia's Argentine coach Hector Cuper to take over next season.

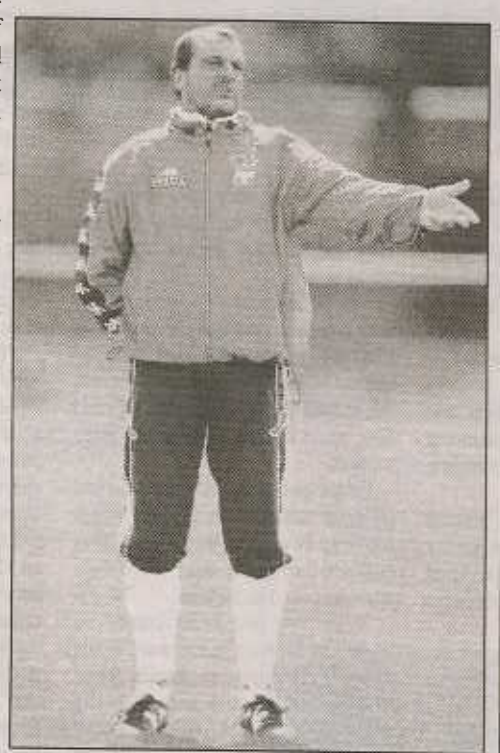
But Inter technical director Gabriele Oriali said Tardelli's position was not in doubt.

"We are satisfied with the work of our coach and it is the time to dismiss these false reports that we have read in some papers and heard on television." I deny that there has been any contact with Cuper," he said on the club's official website.

"Furthermore I can offer the assurance that Marco Tardelli will be on the Inter bench not only for all of this season, but also next year as is written in his contract and is contained in our club's plans," added Oriali.

Inter said in a statement that their Director of Sport, Giuliano Terraneo had flown to Paris for talks with PSG about a swap deal that would see Inter swap Brazilian international midfielder Marcos Vampeta for Dalmat.

Vampeta joined Inter in the summer from Brazilian club Corinthians but he was placed on the transfer list in December after failing to establish himself at the club. Dalmat, a left sided midfielder, joined PSG from Marseille in the close season after making his name with Lens.


Marco Tardelli: Embattled Inter coach.

KAREMBEU RUBBISHES ENGLISH FOOTBALL

Middlesbrough's French international Christian Karembeu says the English premier league is in many ways "amateurish" and teams are tactically inept.

"The game in England is physical and played up in the air, and I find that there is a lack of preparation," Karembeu said. "It is as though teams are making things up as they go along all the time."

The 30-year-old, who joined Middlesbrough from Real Madrid last July, repeated an often-made criticism that the ball spends too much time in the air in English football rather than being skilfully passed around the pitch.

"There is clearly movement in English football, but it is only in a vertical direction," he told the Daily Mirror.

"Besides, movement is not just about attacking. It is bringing the ball forward, passing, breaking free and creating space for your team mates.

"England invented football and the game and everything affecting it all stems from here — supporters and the business aspect as well.

"The sport has become professionalised to an extreme by the premier league. However, it also remains amateurish in a host of respects."

But the former Nantes and Sampdoria midfielder, who has 45 international caps, is impressed by the passion of the supporters in England, which he says was the reason for his decision to leave Madrid. "It is true to say my wife would have preferred Italy or Spain but for me there were no doubts," Karembeu said.

"English people treat football as a spectacle — that is crystal clear. It struck me first when I was here with the French team during Euro 96.

"Then I saw fans arriving at matches straight from their offices, wearing their own clubs' shirts."

Christian Karembeu (right): Unhappy with the English game.

WORLD

BELGIAN ACE, NILIS, HANGS BOOTS

Luc Nilis: Forced out of soccer by injury.

Belgian international striker Luc Nilis has been forced to retire from soccer because of a knee injury received in only his fourth game for Aston Villa.

"It is with regret that we have to announce the retirement of Luc Nilis from professional football," Villa said last week.

"We have monitored Luc's medical progress carefully since his unfortunate injury. However, the medical opinions now received state that Luc will not regain the level of fitness that would be required for him to play football at his previous level in the premier league."

Nilis, 33, suffered a double fracture of his knee after colliding with Ipswich Town goalkeeper Richard Wright after just four minutes of a premier league game on September 9.

He played only one full game for Villa and was substituted in two others.

Villa chairman Doug Ellis said: "This is a tragedy for Luc. Whilst being covered by insurance, that cannot compensate him for not being able to play for Aston Villa which he was obviously so looking forward to. "It is also hugely disappointing for Aston Villa who have lost the services of a world class striker."

Nilis, who played for Belgium in Euro 2000, said: "For the short period I was employed by Aston Villa I enjoyed every minute and am bitterly disappointed I could not continue to score goals. But having taken medical advice I will be unable to continue."

Nilis, who joined from PSV Eindhoven, on a free transfer in the close-season, scored only one goal for Villa but it was a memorable effort in a 1-1 draw against Chelsea.

He scored 10 goals in 56 games for Belgium, having taken four years to get off the mark.

Sepp Blatter: FIFA President.

Lennart Johansson: UEFA president.

FIFA, UEFA AGREE ON NEW TRANSFER SYSTEM

Soccer's transfer system was last week saved by a compromise deal thrashed out between the most powerful figures in the game.

The warring organisations of FIFA and UEFA finally sorted out their differences to agree a formula which will be presented later to the European Union

Instead of football being thrown into chaos by scrapping the transfer system, players will sign contracts which will be virtually unbreakable for the first three years.

If a player wants to leave in that timescale then he will be hit with punitive compensation charges — effectively a different form of transfer fee — with suspensions of up to six months if they break the rules.

FIFA and UEFA confirmed to Mirror Sport that the structure, in principle, is in place and they are almost ready to seek ratification from the players unions throughout the world. It means the value of players will be protected, preventing high-profile managers like Arsenal's Arsene Wenger quitting club football in favour of international management.

And it will end the recent worries of club chairmen, including Aston Villa's Doug Ellis, about splashing out on transfer fees because of an uncertain future. The Premiership's top names, like Manchester United's David Beckham, will be able to sign new contracts — then be free to leave after three years.

FIFA's head of communications Keith Cooper confirmed: "There is now a fresh wind of optimism."

SHEARER PLANS EARLY RETURN FROM INJURY

Alan Shearer: Returns to Premiership action next month.

Newcastle United captain Alan Shearer hopes to return to action on February 24 following knee surgery.

The former England skipper had expected to be out for three months after undergoing an operation to cure tendinitis after the 2-0 defeat at Derby County on December 23.

But he has recovered quicker than expected and hopes now to line up against Manchester City at St James's Park.

"February 24 is the date pencilled in," Shearer said on the club's official website last week. "We play at Charlton Athletic on February 11 but we don't have a game the week after because we aren't involved in the FA Cup.

"That gives me two weeks to give it a full blast. It's nothing definite of course but that's my target and I expect to reach it."

The 30-year-old, who also underwent surgery in 1997 on a serious ankle injury, has scored seven goals in 21 appearances for Newcastle this season.

Liverpool cruises into Cup Final

Liverpool turned on the style to thrash first division Crystal Palace 5-0 at Anfield last week for a 6-2 aggregate success and a place in the League Cup final.

Liverpool ripped through the visiting defence with three goals in five first half minutes from Vladimir Smicer, Danny Murphy and Igor Biscan to wipe out their 2-1 first leg deficit. Murphy added his second after the break and Robbie Fowler, who was outstanding all night, completed the rout a minute from time.

In the night's only other premier league game, a late Ian Harte penalty gave Leeds United a 2-1 win at Aston Villa, the home side's fifth successive league defeat.

At Anfield, Smicer had things moving in the 13th minute when Fowler sent him clear and the Czech calmly slotted past Alex Kolinko.

New signing Jari Litmanen, who again looked sharp throughout, escaped three minutes later and crossed for Murphy to expertly volley in the second.

A clever Fowler back-heel sent Croatian midfielder Biscan scuttling clear for the third after another two minutes.

Veteran midfielder Gary McAllister then rapped a post from 30 metres as Liverpool took total control. Murphy clipped in his second six minutes into the second half and Litmanen should have made it five but took too many touches.

Palace goalkeeper Kolinko was sent off eight minutes from time for bringing down Fowler but the England striker raised the biggest cheer of the night when he poked in the fifth.

"I was very pleased he scored, you could feel his team mates wanted him to score, others missed chances trying to give him a goal and he really deserved it," said coach Gerard Houllier. "I thought the first half was brilliant in terms of team play and we could have scored even more," added the Frenchman.

Liverpool have won the competition five times. In the final at Cardiff's Millennium Stadium on February 25 they will play Ipswich Town or first division Birmingham, who play their second leg next week. Ipswich lead 1-0 from the home first leg.

The cup winners go into next season's UEFA Cup.

At Villa Park, Harte's spot kick, awarded after Steve Staunton brought down Robbie Keane, settled an uninspiring game between two out-of-form teams mired in mid-table.

Leeds climbed three places to 10th on 32 points while Villa, who have won only once in 11 league games, remained 13th on 29.

The result completed a miserable day for Villa, who earlier announced that Belgian international striker Luc Nilis had retired from the game because of the serious knee injury he suffered playing for the club in September.

CANADA TO BID FOR 2010 WORLD CUP

Canada said last week, it might submit a bid to host the 2010 World Cup as a way of sending a message to the world that it was serious about one day hosting the world's premier soccer tournament.

"We've looked into the possibility of making a bid for the 2010 World Cup even though we know South Africa is the front runner," Canadian Soccer Association spokesman Morgan Quarry told Reuters.

"This is more of an idea to put the wheels in motion to potentially host the World Cup some time in the future."

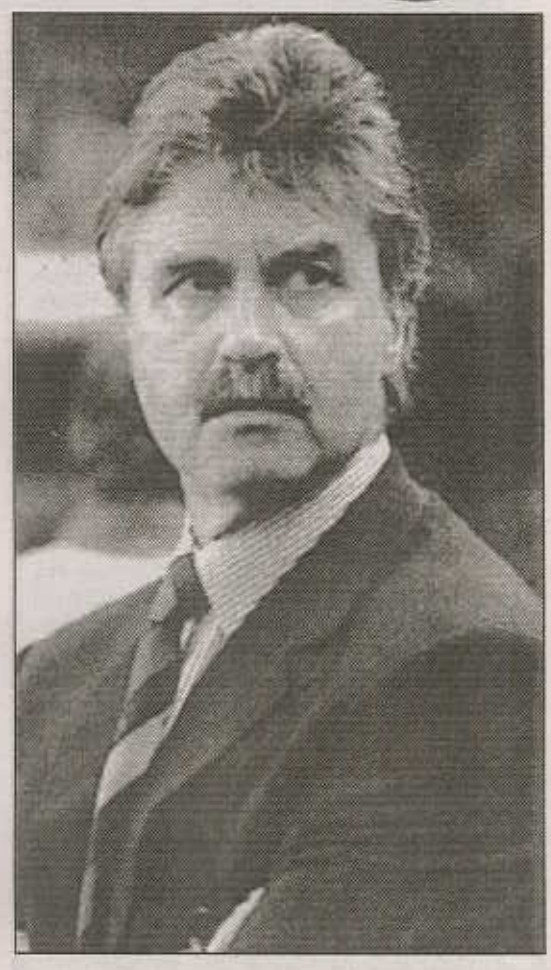
Quarry admitted that Canada did not have adequate facilities to host a World Cup.

The national team can only play at four stadiums in the country and the quality of the pitches there is not up to World Cup standards.

"We have a lot of hurdles. Stadiums are probably our biggest weakness. We don't have the facilities but we wouldn't put in a bid unless we thought we could do it," said Quarry.

There are around 700,000 young soccer players in Canada but the sport is still a minor one in a country dominated by ice hockey, baseball, Canadian football and basketball.

Canada has only qualified for the World Cup once, when it reached the 1986 finals in Mexico but the team lost all three matches against France (0-1), Hungary (0-2) and the Soviet Union (0-2) and was eliminated without scoring a goal or securing a point.



Guus Hiddink: Poor start to a new job.

KEANE DENIES ASKING FOR PAY RISE

Manchester United skipper Roy Keane has slammed reports that he will demand a massive new pay deal. He was furious to read in the Irish Sun that he wants to be paid at least the same as David Beckham.

Keane insists the allegations are nonsense and does not want to be branded greedy by United fans. He took an enormous amount of stick when United broke their wagestructure last year to ensure he stayed at Old Trafford.

Keane secured a staggering £52,000-a-week AFTER tax deal — an incredible £2.49 million a year just 12 months ago.

It is widely expected that Beckham, Ryan Giggs and Andy Cole will be offered even more money when they agree new deals this year. United have stressed that there will be a ceiling on wages and reports of £160,000-a-week are miles wide of the mark.

Sources within the club have told *Irish MirrorSport* that Keane's current deal — £52,000-a-week basic — will be used as the model for their top players. The players will also be offered a separate image rights deal based on merchandising sales — meaning the likes of Beckham and Giggs inevitably earn more than Keane.

United sell more Beckham merchandise than any other player and he wants a slice of that income. But in terms of his basic salary he will be satisfied with a basic deal— around £52,000-a-week after tax — which would make him the joint highest earner.

Keane's advisor, Michael Kennedy, stressed that the United skipper was perfectly happy with his current arrangement — despite claims in yesterday's Irish Sun.situation at Manchester United.

"He is certainly not making any new demands on the club. "Roy's current agreement expires in two-and-a-half years time, that iswhen we will start to renegotiate with Manchester United.

"We will make our representations to the club at the appropriate time."

The pathetic Irish Sun also claimed yesterday that United boss Sir Alex Ferguson wanted Celtic's Henrik Larsson. They claimed Fergie had sounded out Martin O'Neill over a possible £15 move for the brilliant Swedish striker.

But Ferguson, Martin O'Neill, Manchester United, Celtic and Larsson's own people furious denied the allegations. Ferguson, said: "It is absolute nonsense. I am not interested in Larsson,there is no truth in it."

O'Neill, said: "That is the biggest load of nonsense I have heard in a very long time." Larsson's agent Rob Jansen, said: "It is 100 per cent not true. Henrik is very happy at Celtic.

"Our position is the same, we are waiting for Celtic to open negotiations on a new deal."

Jurgen Klinsmann: Not keen on being Stuttgart's sweat merchant.

KLINSMANN REJECTS STUTTGART COACHING JOB

Former German international Juergen Klinsmann has said h e was approached about taking a management job with VfB Stuttgart but turned it down because he wants to remain in the United States with his family.

Ending speculation that he would replace Stuttgart's sport director Karlheinz Foerster, who quit the struggling Bundesliga team on Friday, Klinsmann said he did not want to be tied to a full-time position at the club where his career began.

"VfB President Manfred Haas called me. We talked a long time. It was a very positive conversation," Klinsmann, who won 108 caps for Germany, told the SID sport news agency.

"But I told him that I was not interested in such a job because I plan to stay in the United States with my family."

Klinsmann, who has taken courses to acquire a coaching qualification in Germany, said he felt an attachment to Stuttgart.

"I was honoured that my name was mentioned," he said.

"I also told Mr. Haas that I was always available to work as an external consultant. But not in any way in wich I would be tied to the club."

Stuttgart have 18 points from 18 games this season and lie second from bottom in the 18-team first division.

A VfB spokesman said the club would hold a press conference Soon, where Haas would address the job vacancy.

Former Stuttgart player Reinhold Zech and ex-Borussia Moenchengladbach manager Rolf Ruessmann are reported to be candidates.

HIDDINK'S KOREAN DEBUT ENDS IN DEFEAT

South Korea coach Guus Hiddink saw his new charges slip to a 3-2 defeat at the hands of Norway in his first game at the helm of the 2002 World Cup co-hosts last week.

Missing the likes of Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Stefan Iversen, the Norwegians, made up solely of home-based players, were still too good for the South Koreans in their opening match of the Lunar New Year tournament.

Rosenborg's Frode Johnsen scored twice including the 68th-minute winner, a header from close range. The Koreans took the lead with a penalty by Ko Jong-su after 23 minutes but 12 minutes later Johnsen equalised.

Brann's Thorsten Helstad gave Norway a deserved lead three minutes before the interval, only for Korean substitute

Kim Do-hoon to wipe it out midway through the second half.

Johnsen headed the winner within a minute and the Koreans, despite an improved second half performance, were unable to pull level again. Former Real Madrid and Netherlands coach Hiddink blamed Korea's poor first half showing on nerves.

"In the first half they were anxious, nervous and the players gave the ball away a lot," he said.

"It's the first game on the way to 2002 and we can learn a lot from the first half.

"In the second half, all I can say is that we have to continue in this way. We have to take that as our future and as the way we would like to play," Hiddink said.

"We were unlucky not to score an equaliser to make it 3-3. But my compliments to the team for the second half. We got caught when we made it 2-2 and those are errors that we have to avoid in the future."

WORLD

RUSSO WRITES

By Joe Russo

While I was on holidays last week in Phuket (Thailand) I ran into a number of Italians enjoying a summer vacation on the beautiful Holiday Island.

And wherever there are Italians, there is conversation about football.

Inter is the club that is most talked about and the general consensus seems to be that there is something drastically wrong there. What's new? Anyone could have worked that one out!

This column has in the past tried to shed some light on the whole situation — Inter is indeed a club in trouble.

However, the word 'club' can only be used sparingly with Inter. The problem is that it lacks the structure of a club and a president, Massimo Moratti, who changes coaches regularly, runs it.

Marcello Lippi went after just one round and current coach, Marco Tardelli, must be regretting the day he left the safe post as Italy's Under 21 and Olympic team coach to take charge at Inter.

A recent report said that his job was safe and that he would see out his contract with the club, which runs until the end of next season. Sound very familiar at Inter.

The whole management of the club is dependent on Moratti who is obsessed about buying a Scudetto (Championship). In short, this President buys every player possible in the hope that these overpaid stars will gel together and form a team.

The logic is that the more stars you have, the more your chances are of winning a league title. It may be the case but it certainly isn't true for Inter. This policy has failed year in and year out.

Moratti always opts for the easy solution, that is you replace the coach.

After all Moratti figures that it is the coach's fault and since he has given the coach such a gathering of stars, then they surely will be successful.

Inter's last title was in 1989 when Giovanni Trapattoni was coach and Moratti wasn't president. And there is the solution to Inter's problem.

Inter will not win a title while Moratti remains at the helm. There is far too much pressure exerted on the coach and players because they too are sold regularly. Inter needs to consolidate and become a club again.

They would do well to look at the structure of Juventus - a professional outfit in every sense both on and off the field.

Juventus belongs to the Agnelli family, which is arguably Italy's most influential family, as they also own the FIAT motor company. They run the club using both family members and experts, including former players such as Roberto Bettega.

Inter needs to look and learn and only then will their fortunes start to turn around.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Interesting move by Fiorentina coach, Fatih Terim, to resign at the end of the year after only one season at the club. It only fuels speculation that he will take up the post as AC Milan coach from the beginning of next season.

Many wouldn't ever have believed this possible at the start of the season.

The former Galatasaray coach was unproven in Italy and speculation was rife that he wouldn't last the season.

He was the favourite to be the first Serie A coach sacked this season. With the loss of Gabriel Batistuta to Roma he was on a hiding to nothing.

However, after a shaky start, Terim has worked wonders at Fiorentina and has now even impressed at AC Milan. To even be considered for the Milan job is a great honour and Terim can be rightly proud of his achievements.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Alessandro Del Piero may join the long list of Italian players to have played at Chelsea. It would be an interesting move and perhaps a statement that his days in Italy are finished.

It would be unlikely for him to ever play for Italy again should he join Chelsea. Gianfranco Zola, Roberto Di Matteo, Pierluigi Casiraghi and Gianluca Vialli are just a few who joined Chelsea when it was clear that they were no longer wanted by the Italian coach.

Chelsea are coached of course by Claudio Ranieri, ex Fiorentina and Napoli coach and I am sure that he would love to have Del Piero. So are Del Piero's days really over? Personally I think that he still has something to offer both the Serie A and the Italian Azzurri.

ITALIAN SERIE A

BRESCIA 1 AC MILAN 1

Forward Oliver Bierhoff gave AC Milan the lead with his fifth goal of the season in the 26th minute. Brescia's Dario Hubner took advantage of a poor back pass from Milan defender Paolo Maldini two minutes into the second half to rifle home his eighth goal of the season.

FIORENTINA 1 LAZIO 4

Pavel Nedved opened the scoring with a beautifully-taken volley from the edge of the box midway through the first half.

Argentine striker Hernan Crespo dribbled past the Fiorentina defence twice to score his eighth and ninth goals of the season in the second half. Fiorentina's Enrico Chiesa scored from the penalty spot in the 82nd minute but Marcelo Salas added a fourth for Lazio three minutes later to round out the scoring.

Herman Crespo: He struck twice to help Lazio thrash Fiorentina.

INTER MILAN 1 BARI 0

Christian Vieri scored his third goal of the season, slotting home a deflected shot from team mate Alvaro Recoba.

Bottom club Bari lost their 10th match of the season. Inter Milan won for the first time in five league matches, moving them out of the relegation zone.

JUVENTUS 4 VICENZA 0

Filippo Inzaghi scored a hat-trick, giving him seven goals in the season. Juventus are now unbeaten in 11 league matches and remain three points behind league leaders AS Roma.

Struggling Vicenza lost for the eighth time this season and are sixth from bottom.

AS ROMA 3 NAPOLI 0

Striker Marco Delvecchio opened the scoring with a header in the 21st minute.

Captain Francesco Totti scored his 10th goal of the season and Gabriel Batistuta added his 11th of the campaign five minutes from time. Top-of-the-table Roma stay three points ahead of second-placed Juventus.

REGGINA 0 PERUGIA 2

Perugia captain Marco Materazzi grabbed his sixth goal of the season with a 19th minute penalty strike and midfielder Fabio Liverani scored his first goal in Italy's top flight with a beautifully-taken free kick in the 38th minute.

UDINESE 2 ATALANTA 4

An exciting match saw Atalanta break out of a scoreless slump with four goals.

Striker Nicola Ventola and midfielder Domenico Morfeo hit two goals each as Atalanta managed to score for the first time in four matches. Defender Andrea Sottil headered home in the 35th minute and Mohammed Gargo added a second in the 76th minute for the home side. Udinese have yet to draw at home this season, losing four of nine league matches.

VERONA 0 PARMA 2

Arrigo Sacchi won for the first time in three matches as Parma manager. Forward Marco Di Vaio scored twice, giving Parma a much-deserved away win. Adrian Mutu missed a penalty late in the match for Verona.

LECCE 0 BOLOGNA 0

Lecce extended their unbeaten run to five league matches while Bologna earned their first away point in four league games.

Filippo Inzaghi (right): Whose hat-trick enabled Juventus to beat Vicenza, being shadowed by Guiseppe Cordone.

RESULTS

Brescia	1	AC Milan	1
Fiorentina	1	Lazio	4
Inter Milan	1	Bari	0
Juventus	4	Vicenza	0
AS Roma	3	Napoli	0
Udinese	2	Atalanta	4
Verona	0	Parma	2
Lecce	0	Bologna	0
Reggina	0	Perugia	2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. AS Roma	16	11	3	2	31	12	36
2. Juventus	16	9	6	1	28	13	33
3. Lazio	16	9	3	4	30	18	30
4. Atalanta Bergamo	16	7	5	4	20	14	26
5. Fiorentina	16	6	7	3	30	23	25
6. AC Milan	16	6	6	4	26	23	24
7. Bologna	16	7	3	6	19	17	24
8. Parma	16	6	5	5	19	16	23
9. Udinese	16	7	1	8	28	26	22
10. Perugia	16	6	4	6	22	20	22
11. Inter Milan	16	5	6	5	17	19	21
12. Lecce	16	5	6	5	19	24	21
13. Vicenza	16	4	4	8	16	27	16
14. Verona	16	3	6	7	18	28	15
15. Brescia	16	2	8	6	16	21	14
16. Napoli	16	3	5	8	19	27	14
17. Reggina	16	4	1	11	12	29	13
18. Bari	16	3	3	10	13	25	12

ENGLISH FA CUP FOURTH ROUND

GILLINGHAM 2 CHELSEA 4

Chelsea coasted to a 3-0 halftime lead thanks to a third minute goal from Iceland's Eidur Gudjohnsen followed by two from Dane Jesper Gronkjaer.

The introduction of Iffy Onuora after the interval transformed Gillingham who scored through Paul Shaw five minutes after the break.

Frank Leboeuf then brought down Shaw, conceded a free kick and was stretchered off the field. Carlo Cudicini deflected Nicky Southall's free kick and Onuora was on hand to score.

Gillingham pressed hard but Gudjohnsen put the result beyond doubt in extra time.

MANCHESTER UNITED 0 WEST HAM 1

Paolo Di Canio sent the Cup favourites crashing out of the competition when he outwitted the United defence and pushed the ball past Fabien Barthez in the 75th minute.

West Ham, who had not won at Old Trafford since 1986, held firm against the United strike force who could have scored twice through Ryan Giggs while Teddy Sheringham had a shot cleared off the line.

QUEENS PARK RANGERS 0 ARSENAL 6

Arsenal showed the gulf between the premier league and the first division by outclassing their London rivals.

Arsene Wenger's side cleared an effort off their own line on the half-hour, went straight up the other end and QPR's Chris Plummer put through his own net for their first. Sixty seconds later Sylvain Wiltord's shot deflected into the Rangers net.

Ex-Arsenal player Matthew Rose compounded the home side's misery by putting an Ashley Cole cross into his own goal after 49 minutes to make it 3-0. Wiltord volleyed his second (56) and Robert Pires (58) and Dennis Bergkamp (74) wrapped up Arsenal's win.

Robbie Fowler: He captained Liverpool to a sensational victory over Leeds at the weekend.

MANCHESTER CITY 1 COVENTRY CITY 0

An ugly clash between two of the premier league's strugglers produced little flowing football. John Eustace twice went close for Coventry but Shaun Goater decided the match in the final minute with a fine header.

LEEDS UNITED 0 LIVERPOOL 2

Robbie Fowler inspired Liverpool to a flattering win by laying on two late goals.

Nick Barmby broke the deadlock after 88 minutes when he fired in the rebound after Fowler's low shot came off a post.

In time added on, Fowler's fine pass again found Barmby and he laid the ball to Emile Heskey who thumped in his 16th of the season.

Leeds had two efforts cleared off the line and a strong penalty shout denied on a day of frustration.

BRISTOL CITY 1 KINGSTONIAN 1

Phil Wingfield had the non-leaguers dreaming of place in the fifth round when he rounded the goalkeeper and fired high into the net from a tight angle after 57 minutes.

But in the final minute Tony Thorpe levelled for second division City to secure a replay.

WYCOMBE WANDERERS 2 W'HAMPTON WANDERERS 1

Second division Wycombe, managed by Wimbledon's 1988 FA Cup final goal hero Lawrie Sanchez, reached the fifth round for the first time thanks to Sam Parkin's 85th-minute winner at Adams Park.

Andy Rammell scored from a corner to give the home side a 37th-minute lead before Carl Robinson's header after 59 minutes gave Wolves false hope.

ASTON VILLA 1 LEICESTER CITY 2

Villa's Darius Vassell was sent off early at Villa Park and Ade Akinbiyi put Leicester ahead in the Midlands derby after 42 minutes.

City then had Callum Davidson redcarded before halftime. Julian Joachim levelled for Villa with 14 minutes left but a crashing shot from Arnar Gunnlaugsson with seven minutes left gave the visitors victory. It was Villa's sixth loss in eight games.

EVERTON 0 TRANMERE ROVERS 3

Everton dominated the match early on but were rocked when Steve Yates headed Rovers ahead in the all-Merseyside clash.

Matters got worse for Everton when Jason Koumas's looping shot made it 2-0 before halftime.

Everton's frustrated fans then watched in disbelief as Yates headed Tranmere's third after 62 minutes to complete a sweet victory for the first division side.

DAGENHAM & REDBRIDGE 0 CHARLTON ATHLETIC 1

Garry Hill's non-leaguers dominated the early stages on a bobbly Victoria Road pitch. But premier league Charlton gradually settled and held out until extra time.

They then caught their hosts with a sucker punch, Shaun Newton netting in the first minute of the extra period, and it proved enough to clinch the tie.

Charlton host Tottenham Hotspur in the fourth round.

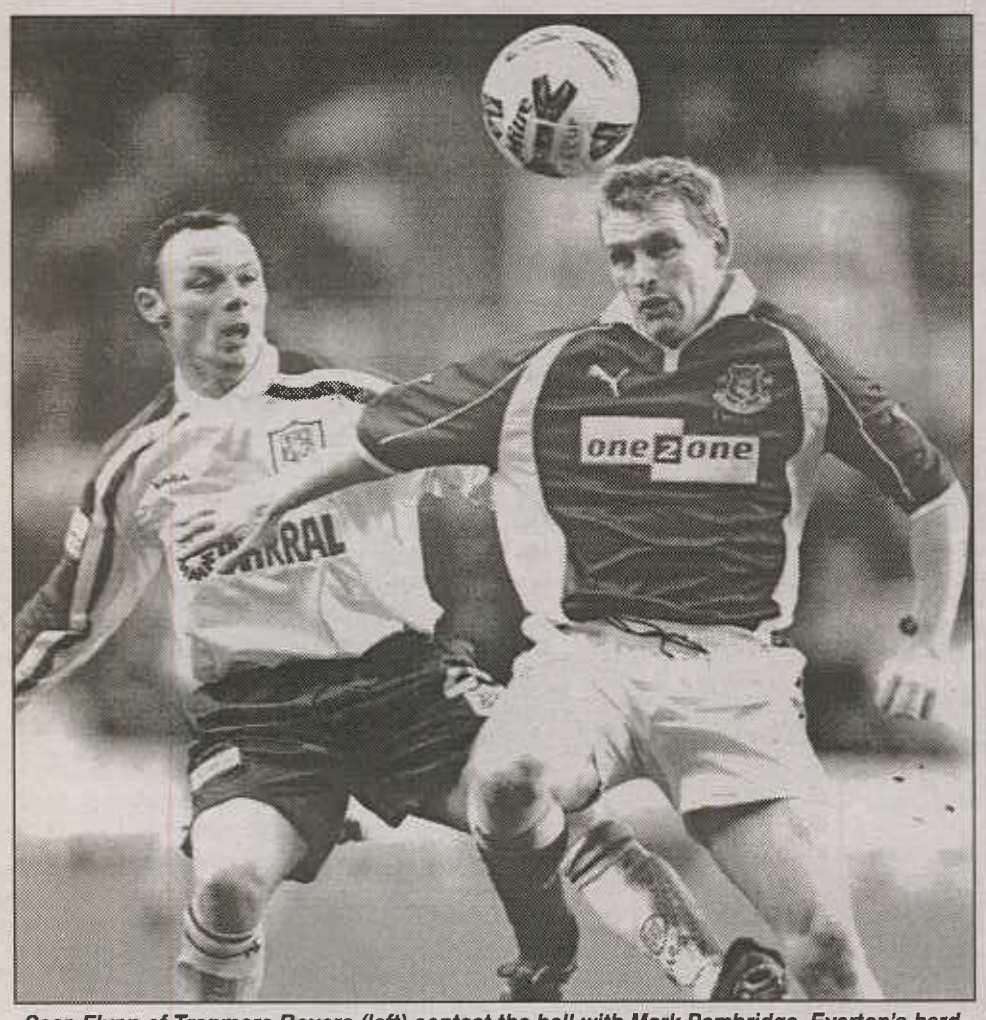
SUNDERLAND 1 IPSWICH TOWN 0

Reserve striker Daniele Dichio proved the difference for Sunderland. His clever diving header after 23 minutes proved to be the decisive goal and he also hit the post in the second half.

SOUTHAMPTON 3 SHEFFIELD WEDNESDAY 1

Southampton completed a Sheffield double after beating United in the third round. Kevin Davies gave them the lead after 11 minutes before Andy Booth's effort trickled in for Wednesday's equaliser midway through the second half.

Jason Dodd converted a penalty with 10 minutes left to give Southampton the lead again and James Beattie completed the scoring in the final minute.



Sean Flynn of Tranmere Rovers (left) contest the ball with Mark Pembridge, Everton's hard-working midfielder.

FA CUP RESULTS

THIRD ROUND REPLAYS

Dagenham & Redbridge (ML) 0 Charlton Athletic 1 (After extra time. Charlton at home to Tottenham Hotspur in fourth round on Wednesday, February 7)

FOURTH ROUND

Bolton (I) 5 Scunthorpe (II) 1, Gillingham (I) 2 Chelsea 4, Manchester United 0 West Ham United 1, Notts County (II) 0 Wimbledon (I) 1 (After extra time. Wimbledon away to Middlesbrough in fourth round on Tuesday, February 6), **Aston Villa 1 Leicester City 2, Blackburn (I) 0 Derby County 0,** (Replay Wednesday, February 7), **Bristol City (II) 1 Kingstonian (ML) 1,** (Replay Wednesday, February 7), **Crewe (I) 0 Stockport (I) 1, Everton 0 Tranmere (I) 3, Leeds United 0 Liverpool 2, Manchester City 1 Coventry City 0, Queens Park Rangers (I) 0 Arsenal 6, Southampton 3 Sheffield Wednesday (I) 1, Sunderland 1 Ipswich Town 0, Wycombe (II) 2 Wolverhampton (I) 1.**

FIFTH ROUND DRAW

Leicester City v Bristol City (II) or Kingstonian (ML)

Wycombe (II) v Middlesbrough or Wimbledon (I)

Bolton (I) v Blackburn (I) or Derby County
Charlton Athletic or

Tottenham Hotspur v Stockport (I)
Liverpool v Manchester City

Arsenal v Chelsea
Southampton v Tranmere (I)

Sunderland v West Ham United

Ties to be played over weekend of February 17 and 18

WORLD

I'M NOT AFRAID OF FIFA, GROBBELAAR

Bruce Grobbelaar does not fear a possible lengthy ban by world soccer's governing body FIFA over match-fixing allegations.

The former Liverpool and Zimbabwe goalkeeper, who had a libel damages award overturned in a London court last week, said in a South African television interview that he felt free to continue his coaching career.

Grobbelaar, now coach of South African premier league club SuperSport United, said: "I was acquitted in a court of law and I cannot be charged again. "I lost a libel action not a court case so there is nothing FIFA can do to me.

"FIFA will be a getting a letter from my lawyers."

The English FA said it would examine the judgement against Grobbelaar after a British court overturned an 85,000 pounds libel award made to him over match-fixing allegations last Thursday.

Three judges upheld an appeal by The Sun against the damages and said they were satisfied Grobbelaar had corruptly taken money to fix games.

"The matter, not least its international consequences, will be raised at the first opportunity with FIFA," the FA said.

The South African FA said recently it would write to the FA in London for further clarification on the implications of the appeal court judgement. It said it would respect any decision taken by FIFA.

After being cleared of match-fixing charges, Grobbelaar was found guilty of misconduct by the FA in September 1997 for breaking betting rules.

He was given a suspended six-month ban and fined 10,000 pounds On Sunday, Grobbelaar said he had "no qualms" about the decision nor the possibility of a ban as he coached his club to a 3-0 win over premier league rivals Santos 3-0 in Pretoria.

Bruce Grobbelaar: In the eye of the storm.

LAUDRUP ON LINE TO COACH RANGERS

Former Danish international Brian Laudrup said he has been offered a coaching role at his old club Rangers, but is weighing up his options and re-adjusting to life following the end of his playing career.

Laudrup, 31, who was forced to bring his glittering career to a somewhat premature close when he retired last summer because of an Achilles injury, has been told by Rangers chairman David Murray that he has an open invitation to return to Ibrox and a job will always be found for him.

The Danish star, who ended his career with Ajax Amsterdam, showed flashes of his old brilliance in a special charity match in Glasgow penultimate Sunday when a team of former Rangers players beat their Celtic counterparts 4-1 in front of 50,000 people.

Laudrup gave a revealing insight into his life and hopes after being forced to quit at what is a relatively young age in today's game.

He said he relished being back at Rangers — where he spent four years between 1994 and 1998 — and his family wished to come back to Scotland.

"I have spoken to David Murray on several occasions since leaving Rangers and he told me that when I make up my mind what I want to do, to give him a call.

"We will see what happens but maybe one day it will happen. I would not mind coming back to Scotland one day. I went back to my old home with my family and my kids were saying 'we want to come back here.'

"At this stage, I am not thinking about that but you never know."

But Laudrup, who has been in top flight football since he broke into the Danish national side as a teenager, and played alongside elder brother Michael, admits he is having trouble adjusting to a rather more sedate life after years in the limelight with Brondby, Bayern Munich, Fiorentina, AC Milan, Rangers, Chelsea and Ajax.

Brian Laudrup: Wanted by Glasgow Rangers as coach.

"I don't know at this point what I am going to do," he said.

"I think after 14 years as a professional I need some distance from the game. I wanted to take a year off now, and I am doing some television work, but maybe coaching with a youth team is something for the future.

"Just to leave football, wich has been an essential part of my life, would be difficult to do.

"I think it is likely that I will get back in some way, maybe not as a manager, but there are lots of other things in football and maybe I could find the right position."

Laudrup admitted to being overwhelmed by the reception at Ibrox on Sunday.

"Only in Glasgow could a game like that attract 50,000 people — we don't even get that for the Danish national team."

REDONDO EYES MARCH COMEBACK

AC Milan midfielder Fernando Redondo expects to be back playing within two months after a frustrating start to his career in Italy.

The Argentine joined Milan from Real Madrid in August for $11.4 million but almost immediately suffered a knee injury that required surgery.

"I'm in pretty good shape at the moment," he said. "My recuperation is going as expected.

"In theory it will be two months before I can play but I'll do everything possible to get back before then."

Redondo has in the past refused to play for Argentina under certain coaches but he did not rule out a return to international football when he regains his fitness.

"Every player likes to play for their national team and even more so when you're talking about a World Cup," he said.

"At the moment I'm just looking towards the short term of getting fit but then we'll see."

Redondo was in Madrid to receive the EFE award for best South American playing in Spain in the last decade.

Redondo was given the award in recognition of his form during four seasons at Tenerife from 1990-94, followed by a six-year spell at Real Madrid.

Fernando Redondo: Hopes to return in two months' time.

FIFA World Rankings

(Valid until February 14)

FIFA founded 1904

1	Brazil	821	70	Zimbabwe	493	138=	L'burg	266
2	France	801	71	Macedonia FYR	488	140	Tanzania	262
3	Argentina	771	72=	Kuwait	483	141	Fiji	251
4=	Czech Republic	742	72=	Uzbekistan	483	142	Korea DPR	250
4=	Italy	742	74	Albania	480	143=	Ant. & Barbuda	244
6	Portugal	738	75	**AUSTRALIA**	479	143=	Grenada	244
7	Spain	734	76	China PR	478	145	Andorra	243
8	Netherlands	708	77=	Cuba	475	145	St Kitts & Nevis	243
9	Yugoslavia	707	77=	Togo	475	147	Liechtenstein	242
10	Paraguay	706	79	Bosnia-Her	472	148	Benin	239
11	Germany	705	80	Algeria	471	149	Sri Lanka	227
12	Mexico	691	82=	Iraq	471	150	Botswana	225
13	Romania	683	82=	Guinea	470	151	Bangladesh	223
14	Norway	675	83	El Salvador	460	152	Dominica	222
15	Colombia	671	84=	Haiti	459	153	Bermuda	219
16	United States	659	84=	Namibia		154	Gambia	216
17	England	657	86	Lithuania	457	154	Maldives	216
18	Croatia	655	87	Congo	455	156	Cape Verde Is.	210
19	South Africa	635	88	Senegal	454	157	Dominican Rep.	207
20	Russia	634	89	Liberia	448	158	Eritrea	196
21	Chile	629	90	New Zealand	443	159	Cayman Islands	194
22	Slovakia	626	91	Gabon	442	160	Yemen	190
23	Denmark	625	92	Armenia	441	161	Mauritania	189
24	Sweden	624	93	Latvia	438	162	Chinese Taipei	186
25	Scotland	612	94	Northern Ireland	437	163	Chad	174
26	Tunisia	611	95	Moldova	430	164	Surinam	173
27=	Belgium	610	96=	Belarus	427	165	Laos	171
27=	Morocco	610	96=	Indonesia	427	166	Nepal	166
29	Trin. & Tobago	600	98	Mali	424	167	Vanuatu	163
30	Egypt	599	99	Vietnam SR	420	168	San Marino	159
31	Turkey	598	100	Qatar	414	169	Cambodia	158
32	Ireland Republic	596	101=	Singapore	412	170	Cook Islands	157
33	Uruguay	590	101=	Syria	412	171	Palestine	152
34	Ukraine	587	103	Uganda	411	172	British Virgin Is.	144
35	Slovenia	586	104	Kenya	408	173	Samoa	140
36=	Cameroon	585	105	Barbados	407	174	Kyrgyzstan	137
36=	Iran	585	106	Jordan	401	175	Netherlands Ant	134
36=	Saudi Arabia	585	107	Oman	395	176	Central A Rep.	127
39	Poland	583	108	Malaysia	390	177	Guinea-Bissau	126
40	Japan	581	109	Wales	387	178	Bahamas	117
41=	Israel	578	110	Lebanon	383	179=	Macao	116
41=	Korea Republic	578	111	Venezuela	377	179=	Philippines	116
43	Greece	573	112	Madagascar	365	181	Sao Tome e Principe	115
44	Austria	572	113	Mozambique	363	182	Niger	107
45	Peru	560	114	Malawi	357	183	Guyana	105
46=	Honduras	557	115	Azerbaijan	349	184	Aruba	100
46=	Jamaica	557	116	Libya	348	185	Tonga	98
48	Hungary	556	117	Mauritius	344	186	Belize	93
49=	Zambia	555	118	Faroe Islands	335	187	E. Guinea	90
49=	Nigeria	555	119	Malta	325	188	Seychelles	83
51	Cote d' Ivoire	550	120	Kazakhstan	323	189	Djibouti	80
52	Iceland	545	121	Panama	319	190	Pakistan	73
53	Ecuador	543	122	India	315	191	Nicaragua	71
54	Bulgaria	540	123	Hong Kong	311	192	PNG	65
55=	Angola	539	124	Myanmar	308	193	Brunei DAR.	64
55=	Costa Rica	539	125	Burundi	306	194	Somalia	
57	Guatemala	532	126	Turkmenistan	305	195	Puerto Rico	52
58=	Ghana	531	127	St Vincent/Gr.	303	196	Anguilla	35
58=	Switzerland	531	128	Rwanda	300	196	Mongolia	35
60	Finland	529	129	Swaziland	295	198	US Virgin Is.	33
61	Thailand	521	130	Sierra Leone	291	199	Guam	29
62	Cyprus	520	131=	Lesotho	289	200	Turks & Caicos Islands	22
63	Canada	517	131=	Solomon Is	289	201	Bhutan	15
64	UAE	512	133	Tahiti	288	202	Montserrat	11
65	Bolivia	509	134	Sudan	284	203	Amer Samoa	8
66	Georgia	508	135	Ethiopia	282			
67=	Congo DR	499	136	Tajikistan	281			
67=	Estonia	499	137	St Lucia	275			
69	Burkina Faso	498	138=	Bahrain	266			

***Note:** Teams inactive since 1991 and teams which have not played yet do not appear in the table.*

WORLD

WORLD RESULTS ... WORLD RESULTS ...

FRENCH CHAMPIONNAT

UNFANCIED LILLE BACK AT TOP

Unfashionable Lille, promoted last season, crushed St Etienne 4-1 to shoot back to the top of the French first division standings.

The team from northern France had led the league momentarily after three rounds in August but were not expected to remain in contention so late in the season. But Dagui Bakari, who scored twice in the 17th and 19th minutes, promising defender Pascal Cygan, who made it three in the 33rd, and Argentine Fernando D'Amico, who sealed victory on the hour, proved they were at their rightful place.

Lille are level with Nantes on 40 points, but have a better goal difference.

Nantes lost 3-1 at Olympique Lyon, whose playmaker Vikash Dhorasoo scored twice. Dhorasoo grabbed his first in the 17th minute to give Lyon a 1-0 lead at the break, but his second goal, from short range in the 69th minute, was far more decisive.

A superb freekick in the 54th minute had allowed Nicolas Gillet to give his Nantes team mates false hopes, but Steed Malbranque made it two for Lyon on a counter-attack in the 59th minute. Ziani was awarded the 67th minute penalty for a Christophe Delmotte foul on Frederic Da Rocha inside the box, but his shot hit the bar.

Struggling Toulouse sank champions Monaco 2-1, although the team from the principality had a perfect start, scoring as early as the third minute through Burundi striker Shabani Nonda.

But Toulouse fought back bravely and scored twice through Colombia's Victor Bonilla in the 39th and 58th minutes.

Lille players celebrating their win over St Etienne.

Olympique Lyon 3 Nantes 1, Paris St Germain 1 RC Lens 0, AJ Auxerre 1 En Avant Guingamp 1, Sedan 0 Metz 0, Lille 4 St Etienne 1, Stade Rennes 1 Bastia 2, Strasbourg 3 Troyes 3, Toulouse 2 Monaco 1, Girondins Bordeaux 3 Olympique Marseille 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Lille	**24**	**11**	**7**	**6**	**29**	**18**	**40**
2. Nantes	24	12	4	8	40	32	40
3. Bordeaux	24	10	9	5	33	21	39
4. Lyon	24	9	11	4	32	20	38
5. Bastia	24	11	5	8	30	24	38
6. Sedan	24	10	7	7	31	24	37
7. En Guingamp	24	9	8	7	27	27	35
8. Troyes	24	9	8	7	30	32	35
9. Stade Rennes	24	9	6	9	27	24	33
10. PSG	24	9	6	9	32	32	33
11. RC Lens	24	8	8	8	27	25	32
12. AJ Auxerre	24	8	7	9	26	30	31
13. St Etienne	24	8	6	10	32	35	30
14. Monaco	24	8	5	11	32	34	29
15. Marseille	24	8	4	12	24	31	28
16. Metz	23	5	9	9	18	27	24
17. Toulouse	24	5	8	11	24	32	23
18. Strasbourg	23	4	6	13	20	46	18

GERMAN BUNDESLIGA

LEADERS RECORD WINS

Bayer Leverkusen showed they were serious about their bid for the German championship when they demolished VfB Stuttgart 4-0 on Sunday.

Leverkusen striker Bernd Schneider broke the first-half deadlock when he scored following a throw-in from Michael Ballack just after the restart.

Two minutes later Stuttgart's playmaker Krasimir Balakov was sent off for handling on the line and striker Ulf Kirsten converted the penalty.

Fredi Bobic: Dortmund ace striker.

Ballack made it 3-0 after 51 minutes with an unstoppable volley from 10 metres. In the 67th minute, Ballack was brought down by Stuttgart 'keeper Timo Hildebrand and Kirsten stepped up again to convert the penalty for 4-0.

In the day's other game, Hamburg were awarded a penalty against Hertha Berlin after 29 minutes when Hertha's Rob Maas was sent off for handball.

Hamburg goalkeeper Hans-Joerg Butt took the penalty, sending Gabor Kiraly the wrong way to score his second goal of theseason.

But the tide began to turn when Hertha striker Michael Preetz equalised in the 63rd minute after a header from Kostas Konstantinidis.

Shortly afterwards Hamburg's Argentine midfielder Rodolfo Cardoso was sent off and 10 minutes from time Preetz scored again from a long pass from Pal Dardai to give Hertha a deserved 2-1 victory.

Hamburg SV 1 Hertha Berlin 2, Bayer Leverkusen 4 Stuttgart 0, Eintracht Frankfurt 1 Cologne 5, Bayern Munich 3 Bochum 2, Kaiserslautern 0 Wolfsburg 0, Werder Bremen 2 1860 Munich 0, Freiburg 2 Unterhaching 0, Borussia Dortmund 2 FC Energie Cottbus 0, FC Schalke 04 2 Hansa Rostock 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Schalke 04	19	11	4	4	39	19	37
2. Bayern Munich	19	11	3	5	40	22	36
3. Borussia Dortmund	19	11	3	5	31	25	36
4. Bayer Leverkusen	19	10	4	5	32	21	34
5. Hertha Berlin	19	10	1	8	39	35	31
6. Kaiserslautern	19	9	4	6	26	23	31
7. Cologne	19	8	5	6	38	30	29
8. VfL Wolfsburg	19	7	7	5	36	24	28
9. SC Freiburg	19	7	6	6	27	21	27
10. Werder Bremen	19	6	6	7	25	29	24
11. 1860 Munich	19	6	6	7	24	33	24
12. Hamburg SV	19	6	3	10	36	36	21
13. Unterhaching	19	5	6	8	19	29	21
14. Hansa Rostock	19	6	3	10	19	31	21
15. Energie Cottbus	19	6	2	11	22	34	20
16. Frankfurt	19	6	2	11	23	36	20
17. VfB Stuttgart	19	4	6	9	25	34	18
18. VfL Bochum	19	5	3	11	18	37	18

PRIMERA LIGA

REAL MADRID INCREASE LEAD

Champions Deportivo Coruna failed to put pressure on leaders Real Madrid as they were held to a 2-2 draw by Athletic Bilbao in their match at the San Mames Stadium in the Spanish first division.

Barcelona also missed an opportunity to close the gap on Real as they fought out a goalless draw at Malaga.

Bilbao started the brighter of the two teams with Deportivo sorely missing the stabilising presence of Brazilians Mauro Silva and Cesar Sampaio in the midfield.

Unsurprisingly it was the home side that took the lead after just eight minutes after a lofted corner from Julen Guerrero was picked up Ismael Urzaiz.

The burly striker shielded the ball and played it back to Inigo Larrainzar who was lurking five metres outside the area.

The defender then drilled the ball through the crowded area to beat the unsighted Deportivo keeper Jose Molina.

But Deportivo settled as the half went on and two goals in three minutes from Dutch international Roy Makaay saw them take a 2-1 lead into the break.

His first came on 36 minutes after a fine floated cross from midfielder Fran. The Dutch international rose high above the Bilbao defence and directed a fine angled header past keeper Inaki Lafuente.

Makaay's second, his eighth of the season, came only three minutes later. The Dutchman snapped up a loose back pass by defender Aitor Larazabal, coolly rounded Lafuente and then blasted the ball home.

Simao: Barcelona winger.

But Larazabal atoned for his mistake and made it 2-2 when he scored from the penalty spot after Julen Guerrero was controversially adjudged to have been brought down in the area.

Barcelona were put under severe pressure by Malaga, who looked threatening despite the absence of leading striker Dely Valdes.

Barcelona took the initiative in the second half, but failed to convert their pressure into goals.

Barcelona's embattled neighbours Espanyol were given some much-needed cheer with a sparkling 5-0

Alaves 1 Las Palmas 0, Celta Vigo 1 Osasuna 0, Santander 1 Real Sociedad 4, Rayo Vallecano 0 Villarreal 1, Real Oviedo 3 Numancia 0, Valencia 0 Real Madrid 1, Valladolid 2 Mallorca 0, Bilbao 2 Deportivo Coruna 2, Espanyol 5 Zaragoza 0, Malaga 0 Barcelona 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Real Madrid	**20**	**14**	**3**	**3**	**47**	**21**	**45**
2.La Coruna	20	11	5	4	36	20	38
3. Barcelona	20	11	4	5	39	27	37
4. Valencia	20	10	5	5	29	14	35
5. Real Mallorca	20	8	7	5	28	27	31
6. Rayo Vallecano	20	7	8	5	38	29	29
7. Villarreal	20	8	5	7	24	22	29
8. Malaga	20	8	4	8	30	29	28
9. Las Palmas	20	8	4	8	23	36	28
10. Alaves	20	8	3	9	30	27	27
11. Espanyol	20	8	3	9	26	23	27
12. Ath Bilbao	20	7	6	7	29	27	27
13. Real Oviedo	20	8	3	9	26	33	27
14. Valladolid	20	5	10	5	24	25	25
15. Real Zaragoza	20	5	9	6	24	28	24
16. Celta Vigo	20	6	5	9	23	30	23
17. Numancia	20	5	4	11	20	33	19
18. Osasuna	20	3	8	9	20	30	17
19. Real Sociedad	20	4	5	11	21	40	17
20. Santander	20	3	5	12	21	37	14

WORLD LEAGUES

ENGLISH FIRST DIVISION

Rochdale 3 Leyton Orient 1, Barnet 1 Hartlepool 3, Blackpool 1 York 0, Carlisle 2 Mansfield 1, Cheltenham v Scunthorpe postponed, Chesterfield 3 Torquay 0, Exeter 1 Brighton 0, Kidderminster 2 Hull 2, Lincoln 2 Darlington 2, Macclesfield 2 Cardiff 5, Plymouth 1 Halifax 0, Southend 0 Shrewsbury 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Chesterfield	30	19	9	2	59	22	66
2. Cardiff	26	14	9	3	60	31	51
3. Brighton	26	16	3	7	42	21	51
4. Rochdale	25	13	8	4	36	21	47
5. Leyton Orient	26	13	7	6	37	33	46
6. Southend	28	11	11	6	33	27	44
7. Hartlepool	27	12	7	8	43	35	43
8. Blackpool	26	12	4	10	38	35	40
9. Cheltenham	26	11	6	9	33	29	39
10. Scunthorpe	25	9	7	9	33	25	34
11. Kidderminster	26	8	10	8	29	32	34
12. Barnet	26	9	6	11	44	43	33
13. Hull	27	7	12	8	22	24	33
14. Plymouth	25	9	6	10	27	32	33
15. Mansfield	27	8	9	10	36	43	33
16. Macclesfield	28	7	10	11	33	41	31
17. Shrewsbury	26	8	6	12	23	35	30
18. Lincoln	25	6	10	9	33	36	28
19. Darlington	27	7	7	13	25	32	28
20. Halifax	26	7	6	13	28	38	27
21. Torquay	29	6	9	14	33	56	27
22. York	27	7	4	16	22	41	25
23. Exeter	29	5	8	16	23	46	23
24. Carlisle	25	5	6	14	27	41	21

BELGIAN FIRST DIVISION

Standard Liege 1 Germinal Beerschot 1, Excelsior Mouscron 4 Mechelen 2, La Louviere 0 Harelbeke 2, Beveren 1 Anderlecht 3, Antwerp 1 Charleroi 1, Lokeren 2 Club Bruges 2, Ghent 1 Eendracht Aalst 0, Genk 3 Sint-Truiden 0, Lierse 1 Westerlo 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Anderlecht	19	16	3	0	56	16	51
2. Club Bruges	19	16	2	1	59	14	50
3. Standard Liege	20	11	5	4	50	24	38
4. Ghent	19	10	5	4	40	29	35
5. Westerlo	19	10	4	5	35	28	34
6. Mouscron	20	10	4	6	44	29	34
7. Charleroi	20	10	3	7	36	34	33
8. Lierse	20	9	4	7	32	27	31
9. Beerschot	20	9	2	9	35	30	29
10. Lokeren	20	7	7	6	29	30	28
11. Beveren	20	7	5	8	19	40	26
12. Genk	20	6	6	8	26	27	24
13. Antwerp	20	7	2	11	25	30	23
14. Eendracht Aalst	20	4	4	12	21	46	16
15. Sint-Truiden	20	3	4	13	20	39	13
16. Harelbeke	20	4	1	15	24	60	13
17. Mechelen	20	2	5	13	27	48	11
18. La Louviere	20	1	6	13	13	40	9

DUTCH FIRST DIVISION

Feyenoord 2 NAC Breda 0, PSV Eindhoven 6 RBC Roosendaal 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1. Feyenoord	**18**	**15**	**1**	**2**	**43**	**16**	**46**
2. PSV Eindhoven	18	12	5	1	38	12	41
3. Vitesse Arnhem	18	11	4	3	36	25	37
4. Ajax Amsterdam	18	10	3	5	45	24	33
5. Roda JC Kerkrade	18	9	3	6	35	25	30
6. Willem II Tilburg	18	7	6	5	27	22	27
7. NEC Nijmegen	18	6	9	3	24	19	27
8. Utrecht	18	8	3	7	34	30	27
9. RKC Waalwijk	18	7	6	5	19	16	27
10. NAC Breda	18	7	3	8	24	30	24
11. AZ Alkmaar	18	6	5	7	28	32	23
12. Groningen	18	6	4	8	25	29	22
13. Twente Enschede	18	5	6	7	28	33	21
14. Heerenveen	18	4	7	7	20	28	19
15.Doetinchem	18	4	1	13	24	38	13
16. Sparta Rotterdam	18	3	4	11	23	37	13
17. RBC Roosendaal	18	3	1	14	23	51	10
18. Fortuna Sittard	18	1	5	12	13	42	8

QANTAS
THE SPIRIT OF AUSTRALIA

National Soccer League

	TOTAL							HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A
SOUTH MELBOURNE	16	11	4	1	32	9	37	8	7	1	0	20	4	8	4	3	1	12	5
PERTH GLORY	16	9	4	3	36	16	31	9	6	2	1	24	6	7	3	2	2	12	10
SYDNEY OLYMPIC	16	9	3	4	25	14	30	7	5	1	1	14	5	9	4	2	3	11	9
MARCONI STALLIONS	16	8	5	3	25	15	29	9	5	2	2	16	11	7	3	3	1	9	4
WOLLONGONG WOLVES	14	8	4	2	28	17	28	7	4	2	1	13	8	7	4	2	1	15	8
PARRAMATTA POWER	16	7	1	8	26	21	25	8	4	0	4	15	13	8	4	1	3	11	8
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS	16	7	3	6	29	26	24	8	4	2	2	14	11	8	3	1	4	15	15
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE	15	7	2	6	24	26	23	8	5	1	2	18	13	7	2	1	4	6	13
SYDNEY UNITED	16	6	5	5	22	25	21	7	3	3	1	10	10	9	3	2	4	12	15
CANBERRA COSMOS	16	6	3	7	27	26	19	6	2	1	3	10	9	10	4	2	4	17	17
NORTHERN SPIRIT	15	5	4	6	18	17	19	9	3	3	3	9	8	6	2	1	3	9	9
FOOTBALL KINGZ	16	5	4	7	22	26	19	8	4	2	2	14	7	8	1	2	5	8	19
BRISBANE STRIKERS	16	4	4	8	26	33	16	6	3	2	1	15	8	10	1	2	7	11	23
NEWCASTLE UNITED	16	3	6	7	14	28	15	10	3	2	5	9	15	6	0	4	2	5	13
EASTERN PRIDE	16	2	4	10	18	27	10	7	1	4	2	8	9	8	1	0	7	10	16

Matches played against Carlton will result in all teams being awarded a 3-0 win and 3 competition points

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
(Burgess 27)
SYDNEY UNITED 2
(Arambasic 35, Burt 55)

Venue: North Sydney Oval. **Crowd:** 3,731. **Referee:** S Micaleff.
Cautions: Webb (SU) 9, Sobczyk (NS) 22, Deur (SU) 37, Awaritefe (SU) 37, Burt (SU) 55', Arrarte (SU) 70, Arambasic (SU) 85.
Red Cards: M Bingley 68' (NS)
Teams: SPIRIT: Henderson (gk), Bingley, Smith, Thomas, Moreira (Cunico 65), Mendez (Slater 65), Cranney, Burgess, Watkins (Cantanzaro 83), Sobczyk, Foster.
UNITED: Tolios, Olic (Jedinak 82) Burt, Plesa, Arambasic, Arrarte, Podeljak, Maric, Deur, Awaritefe (Menapi 57), Webb.

MARCONI STALLIONS 2
(Longo 2, Radulovic 85)
PARRAMATTA POWER 1
(Thorp 89)

Venue: Marconi Stadium. **Crowd:** 3,515. **Referee:** B Hugo.
Cautions: Farah 18' (MS), Thorp 61' (PP), Bell 80' (MS).
Teams: MARCONI STALLIONS: Aceski, Babic (Bell 46'), Costanzo, Longo, Kim, Care (Gibson 78'), Farah, Brownlie (Radulovic 65'), Renaud, Trajanovski, Zoric.
PARRAMATTA POWER: Crews, Barrett (Ardone 46'), Elrich, Orlic, Tobin, Miller, Griffiths (Thorp 46'), Brown, Bagojevic (Lee 78'), Vrkic, Bennett.

LEADING GOALSCORERS
After Round Sixteen

D. MORI	(Perth Glory)	11
A. THOMPSON	(Marconi/Carlton)	10
B. BURGESS	(Northern Spirit)	9
J. MILLER	(Parramatta Power)	9
S. DESPOTOVSKI	(Perth Glory)	8
S. CHIPPERFIELD	(W'gong Wolves)	7
A. VLAHOS	(South Melbourne)	7

NEWCASTLE UNITED 1
(Buonavoglia 90+)
EASTERN PRIDE 0

Venue: Marathon Stadium. **Crowd:** 6005. **Referee:** P Green.
Cautions: G Sprod (NU) 45, M Gotis (EP) 78. **Red Cards:** Nil.
Teams: NEWCASTLE UNITED: Catlin, Roberts, Sprod, Dodd, Wilson, Magnacca (Kemp 92), Buonavoglia, Tsekenis, Masi, Harper (McBreen 72), Juchniewicz (Wieczorek 69).
EASTERN PRIDE: Jevdjevic, Fak, Gotis, Kim, Macnicul, Puca, Hutchinson, Bunagiar (Deak 63), Cassar (Sekulovski 71), Atkinson, Mistiopulos.

PERTH GLORY 1
(Harnwell 84)
WOLLONGONG WOLVES 1
(Horsley 50)

Venue: Perth Oval. **Crowd:** 16,019. **Referee:** M.Shield.
Cautions: Young (WW) 3, Reid (WW) 21, Harries (WW) 44, Maloney (PG) 57.
Teams: PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Trajkovski (Maloney 35), Edwards (Naven 54), Milicevic, Harnwell, Deans, Junior, Faria (Carbone 81), Mori, Despotovski, Wehrman.
WOLVES: Barlow, Souris, Ceccoli, Horsley, Reid, Young (O'Grady 87), Chipperfield, Harries (Stanton 67), Huxley, Blake, Middleby (Lucas 75).

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

ZELJKO SUSA: Man of the Match performance against Adelaide City.

SOUTH MELBOURNE 1
(De Amicis 47+)
ADELAIDE CITY 0

Venue: Bob Jane Stadium. **Crowd:** 6,557. **Referee:** Con Diomis
Cautions: Karlovic (AC) 16, Pelosi (AC) 24, De Amicis (SM) 40, Lagati (AC) 59, Pantelis (AC) 87.
Teams: SOUTH MELBOURNE: Petkovic, Clarkson, Durakovic, Kisnorbo, De Amicis, Coveny, Susa, Panopoulos (Colosimo 50), Boutsianis (Lozanovski 66), Trimboli (c), Kalogeracos.
ADELAIDE CITY: Cagalj, Lagati, Kovacevic, Karlovic, Pantelis, Hassell, Veart, Vidmar (c), Salapasidis (Brain 54), Pelosi, Tunbridge.

FOOTBALL KINGZ 1
(Burton 55)
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 0

Venue: Ericsson Stadium. **Crowd:** 3,030. **Referee:** D. Rugg
Cautions: Cardozo (SO) 57, Bolton (SO) 70, Sinovic(SO) 74, Juric (SO) 79, Halpin (SO) 85, Stevens (FK) 87. **Red Cards:** Sinovic (SO) 80
Teams: FOOTBALL KINGZ: Eaddy, Lines, Osman, Jackson, Davis, Urlovic (Stevens 80), Ibrahim (Rufer 46), Ngata (Cartwright 87), Hickey, Douglas, Burton.
SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Bolton, Kohler, Baillie, Juric, Marusic, Halpin, Collina, Owens, Augerinos (Parisi 72), Cardozo (Sinovic 64), Carle (Wilson 46).

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2
(Marth 58 pen, Cervinski 77)
BRISBANE STRIKERS 1
(Harris 60)

Venue: Knights Stadium. **Crowd:** 4728. **Referee:** M. Breeze.
Cautions: McLaren (BS) 57, Bell (69), Ognenovski (MK) 86.
Red card: None
Teams: MELBOURNE KNIGHTS: Acevski, Vargas, Vasilevski (A. Vargas 57), Ognenovski, Porter (Vukadin 85), Kiratzoglou, Da Costa (Pelikan 82), Horvat, Cervinski, Marth, Lapsansky.
BRISBANE STRIKERS: Duke, Stefanutto,Grierson, Srhoj, McLaren, Davidson, Harris, Meredith (Bell 46), Drake, Rech, Buljan.

ROUND 17

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 2
Parramatta Power ..... vs ..... Melbourne Knights
Brisbane Strikers ..... vs ..... Newcastle United

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 3
Canberra Cosmos ..... vs ..... Marconi Stallions
Eastern Pride ..... vs ..... Football Kingz

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 4
South Melbourne ..... vs ..... Perth Glory
Sydney United ..... vs ..... Adelaide City Force
Sydney Olympic ..... vs ..... Northern Spirit

Wollongong Wolves — Bye

CANBERRA COSMOS
BYE

K